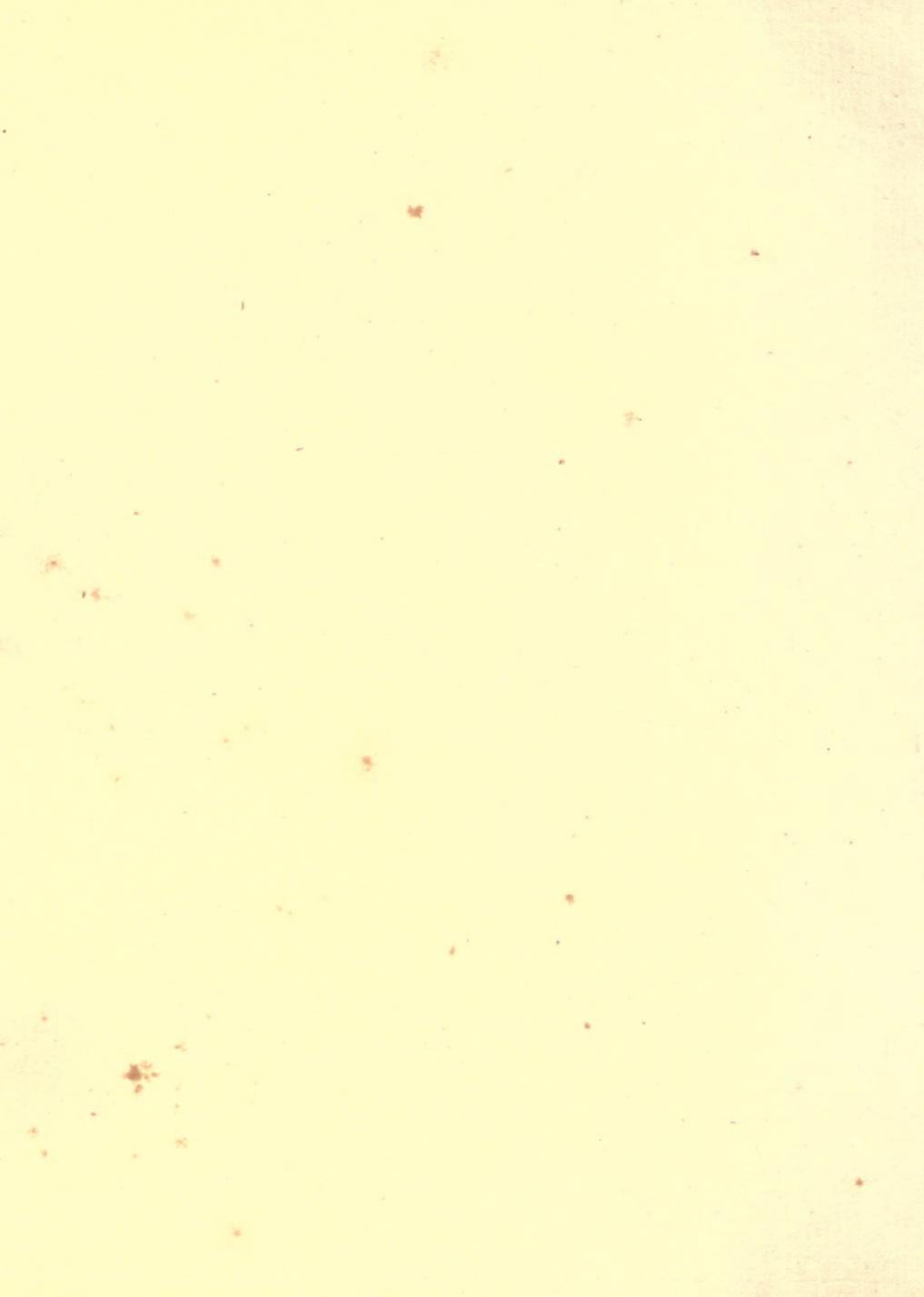


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THE MAID OF ORLEANS

*Five hundred copies of this Edition
have been printed and the type
distributed*

No.

LA PUCELLE THE MAID OF ORLEANS:
AN HEROIC-COMICAL POEM IN TWENTY-
ONE CANTOS BY AROUET DE VOLTAIRE:
A NEW AND COMPLETE TRANSLATION IN-
TO ENGLISH VERSE REVISED CORRECTED
AND AUGMENTED FROM THE EARLIER
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF W. H. IRELAND
AND THE ONE ATTRIBUTED TO LADY
CHARLEVILLE WITH THE VARIANTS NOW
FOR THE FIRST TIME TRANSLATED BY
ERNEST DOWSON: IN TWO VOLUMES:
VOLUME TWO

LONDON: PRINTED FOR THE
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CANTO XII

Monrose slays the almoner — Charles discovers Agnes who consoled herself with Monrose in Cutendre's Castle.

True, I had sworn to moralize no more,
To narrate brief, avoiding long discourse,
But garrulous the God-head I adore,
And who is proof against Don Cupid's force?
His inspiration fires my fevered brain,
And my pen scribbles on the unequal strain.
Young beauties, maidens, widows, wives enrolled
Upon his charming banners' ample fold ;
Ye who alike receive his flames or darts,
Now tell me, when two glowing youthful hearts,
Equal in talents, merit and in grace,
When both would court you in the fond embrace,
Pressing alike, and fanning rapture's fire,
Awakening in the breast each keen desire ;
Does not a strange embarrassment ensue?

Perhaps this simple tale is known to you ;
An ass, in school illustrious, who lay
Stabled between two equal loads of hay,
Alike in form, they drew him either way.
He pricked his ears and dubious long delayed,
By potent laws in *equilibrio* swayed,
Till loath to choose, unable to decide
From fatal doubt, the ass with hunger died.
Oh ! never follow such philosophy,
But rather honour intermittently,
Your rival swains, with all the joy you will ;
To risk your precious life is always ill.

Not far removed from this monastic pile,
Polluted, sad and stained with blood-shed vile,
Where nuns a score that morn from sorrow's spell,
Our amazon had but avenged too well,
Hard by the Loire, there stood a castle old,
Which turrets, loop-holes and draw-bridge uphold,
A current level with its margin flowed,
Meandering round this turretted abode ;
While twice two hundred bow-shots served to mark
The broad enclosure of the spacious park.
A Baron old, Cutendre intitulat
Was Seigneur of this fortunate estate,

Each stranger there became a welcome guest,
The ancient lord, whose heart was of the best,
Made it a refuge for the country round ;
English and French a like reception found.
Stranger in coach, in boots, in gaiters 'rayed,
Prince, nun or monk, or Turk or priest by trade,
Were welcomed there with amity most true ;
But those that came, must enter two by two ;
For every lord his fantasy must feed,
And this same Baron firmly had decreed,
That even numbers only stayed with him,
Odd numbers never ; such his crazy whim.
When two and two assailed his mansion's gate
All things went well ; but woe betide the fate
Of him who single sounded at his port ;
He badly supped,—was fickle fortune's sport
Till some companions came to glad his view,
Making the perfect number—two is two.

The martial Joan, who had reta'en her arms,
Which loudly rattled on her sturdy charms,
With Agnes, bland and fair, at setting day
She here, confabulating, bent her way.
The Almoner who followed close behind,
The Almoner of ardour unconfined,

Reaches full soon the hospitable door.
As some dire wolf, his chaps distained with gore,
Mouths the soft down of some late-rescued lamb,
Who bleating walks beside the sorrowing dam
Whilst he from recent disappointment bold
Watches to scale the well-defended fold ;
So with an ardour nothing could deter,
And eye on fire, the priestly ravisher
Went prowling after his departed prey,
In moment of enjoyment snatched away.
He rings, he calls ; those who attending wait,
Perceive a single stranger at the gate ;
And lo ! the two substantial beams above,
To whose ascendant force responsive move
The trembling rafters of the ponderous frame,
Rose up—and up the heavy draw-bridge came.
At such a sight, expected not the least,
Who cursed and swore, if not the scurvy priest !
He seeks the soaring rafters with his eyes,
He lifts his hand, and voiceless gives no cries.
Thus have I seen from leaden spouts on high
A cat steal down to some gay aviary,
And pass her trait'rous paws through slender wires
That screened the songsters from her fell desires ;
Pursuing with her eyes the feathered race

Who safely perched, elude her cruel chase.
But our lewd Almoner was more dismayed
When, from beneath an elm's high tufted shade,
A handsome youth he saw, with golden hair,
With eye-brows black and an assured air,
His eyes were lustrous and his downy chin,
And eke the graces had adorned his skin ;
He shone with colours of a brighter age ;
'T was Love himself, or else the handsome page ;
'T was young Monrose, who all the day had roved
In search of that dear object whom he loved.
When at the convent the lost fair he sought,
(Some holy comforter the sisters thought)
The blooming youth to their too partial sight
Than th'Angel Gabriel appeared more bright,
Come down to bless them from the Heavens' height.
The gentle sisters when they saw Monrose,
Their faces dyed in colours of the rose.
And thus each whispered, "Where, alas, was he,
Merciful Father, when they ravished me?"
Forming a ring their tongues incessant go,
They press upon him and no sooner know,
That this sweet page in search of Agnes hied,
When straight was given a courser and a guide,
In order that no ill might him befall,

In journeying to Cutendre's castle wall.
He saw upon the road, arriving there,
Hard by the bridge the brutal Almoner.
With joy and rage, he felt his bosom swell ;
"Ah, then 't is you," he cried, "vile priest of Hell.
By Chandos and my soul's salvation now,
And more, by her I swear who has my vow,
That thou shalt expiate thy damning deeds."
The chaplain's wrath his power of speech impedes ;
He loaded pistol, the nice trigger drew,
The cock obeyed, pan flashed and bullet flew ;
Subservient to the ill directed glance
Wide of the mark, it whizzed a line of chance.
His pistol now the royal page presents,
Lodging with surer aim its dire contents,
Full in that front, where nature's hand designed
The rugged outline of a wicked mind.

Down fell the Almoner, the Page's breast
Some sparks of pity for his foe confesst ;
"Alas !" he cried, "a christian die, at least,
Te Deum say ; you lived a very beast.
Ask Heaven's forgiveness for your luxury,
Pronounce Amen, and seek eternity."
The tonsured villain cried : "I am damned, I know,

And to the devil I am forced to go."
He spoke and died, and his perfidious spright
To swell the infernal cohort flew outright.

While thus impenitent, this monster hied
On brimstone flames of Satan to be fried,
King Charles, o'erloaded with his grief profound
His errant mistress anxious sought around
And as he strolled along Loire's pleasant tide
His kind confessor journeyed by his side.
Now in few words I must my readers tell,
In what a pious doctor should excel
Whom a voluptuous prince in youthful pride
For etiquette appoints to be his guide.
'T is one who to indulgence sets no line,
Who in his hand knows gently to incline
Of good and ill the most perfidious scales,
Who leads you up to Heaven by pleasant vales.
Who, (surest thus his master's heart to win,)
Instructs him conscientiously to sin
Composing still his actions, eyes and face,
Observing all and flattering with grace,
The master, mistress and the confidant,
Ever alert and always complacent.
The confessor, of whom I now shall speak,

Was a true son of good Saint Dominic,
Whom Father Bonifoux we'll henceforth call ;
He could accommodate himself to all.
His lord he thus bespoke, devout of heart :
"I pity you, alas ! your grosser part
Has got the upperhand—fatal affair.
Agnes to love is sinful, I declare,
But venial sins like that were much in vogue
With the old Hebrews of the decalogue.
His servant Agar Abraham beguiled
And proved the father of his handmaid's child ;
Bright were the eyes caused Sarah's jealous pain,
And righteous Jacob married sisters twain.
The patriarchs all loved variety
In the exchange of amorous mystery.
Boaz, the veteran, after harvest led
The young and lovely Ruth to his old bed
And not to mention Bathsheba the fair,
His full seraglio was King David's care ;
Where his brave son for flowing locks renowned
Withal to stay his matchless vigour found.
Of Solomon, the judgment sage you've heard :
Like oracle men listened to his word,
Wisest of Monarchs, tutored in all things,
He was alike the most gallant of kings.

If you the track of these dear sins pursue,
If love must all your youthful years subdue,
Console yourself—wisdom will have its turn,
We sin in youth ; grown old, to grace return.”
“Ah !” cried Charlot, “this lecture’s good to con,
Alas ! how far am I from Solomon !
Three hundred mistresses his ample store
I had but one, and she is mine no more.
His happiness does but augment my woe.”
All down his nose his piteous tear-drops flow,
And interrupt his voice plaintive and low,
When turning towards the river’s banks his eyes,
On palfrey mounted, trotting hard, he spies
A scarlet cloak, an ample paunch and round,
The judge’s band ; good Bonneau then was found.
Now each must own, that after his adored,
Nought to her lover can such bliss afford,
As once more his true confidant to greet ;
The breathless monarch ’gan his name repeat,
Crying : “What demon brings thee here, Bonneau ?
Where is my love ?—Whence camest thou ? Let me know.
What spot she graces, where her bright eyes reign ?
How shall I find her ?—Tell me quick !—Explain !”

To all these questions prompt by Charles proposed,

Anon good Bonneau in due turn disclosed ;
How doublet he had been compelled to wear,
How kitchen service eke had been his care ;
How, by a trick, he had escaped well,
Eluding Chandos as by miracle,
When all were occupied to join the fight ;
How each was in pursuit of Agnes bright ;
Omitting nought he thus the tale went through,
Recounting all : whereas he nothing knew :
He did not know the fatal destiny
Of the English churchman's brutal luxury,
Nor how the page had loved—and been loved back,
Nor of the convents most incestuous sack.
Over and over they explained their dread ;
And reassumed an hundred times the thread
Of their complaints ; blamed fate but England more,
Till both became as pensive as before.
'Twas night and Ursa Major's car on high
Towards the Nadir had his course gone by,
The Jacobin his pensive prince addressed :
"Darkness is near, let memory warm your breast,
That every mortal prince or monk, thus late,
Must seek some roof, where he in happy state,
May sup and pass the hours of night away."
The tristful king was ready to obey,

Without reply—and dwelling on his pain,
With head reclined he galloped o'er the plain ;
And soon before the moat of the chateau
Stood Charles, his confessor and eke Bonneau.

In the canal his rival's carcass thrown,
Still near the bridge the page remained alone,
Forgetting not at all his journey's goal,
He hid within, the anguish of his soul,
Viewing the bridge that barred him from his Dear ;
But when, beneath the moon, he saw appear
The Frenchmen three, once more within his heart,
He felt hope's fire its cordial glow impart ;
And with a grace as rare as his address,
Hiding his name, and more, his eagerness,
His very sight excited tenderness.
And when he spoke, the king himself he pleased,
And the good monk the soft contagion seized ;
Who leering piously with aspect bland,
Patted his downy cheek with open hand.

An even number thus composed of four,
The beams which late aloft the drawbridge bore,
Slowly descend ; the cavaliers pass on,
Beneath their coursers' hoofs the madriers groan.

Fat Bonneau puffing to the kitchen went,
His thoughts, as ever, on good cheer intent:
Nor Bonifoux required him to entreat,
But on devoutly passed to bless the meat.
Charles, with the name of simple *sieur* arrayed,
Cutendre sought ere *sonnus* he obeyed.
The worthy Baron courtesy expressed,
Then to his chamber led the royal guest.
Charles now required the balms of solitude
To relish all his deep solicitude.
Agnes he wept; but shedding thus the tear,
He little dreamt her charms reposed so near.

More than the king, Monrose already knew,
And with address from prating pages drew
Full information where fair Agnes lay;
Discreetly reconnoitering his way,
Just as a cat when quiet lies the house,
Watches the stealthy passage of a mouse,
And stealing forth the feeble foe to meet,
Lets not the earth feel the impress of her feet,
But once in view upon the prey she springs;
Monrose alike, impelled by love's own wings,
With arms extended onward cautious steals,
Planting the toes, and raising high the heels;

O Agnes ! Agnes ! in thy room he kneels.
Less quickly fly to amber lightest straws,
Less quickly steel obeys magnetic laws,
Than on his knees the bold Monrose we find
Beside the couch where the fond belle reclined.
For words they had nor leisure nor desire,
Sudden as thought bright blazed the amorous fire
In an eye's twinkling, one warm amorous kiss,
Their half-closed mouths united straight in bliss ;
Their dying eyes the tender fires disclose,
Their soul comes floating to their lips of rose ;
Their lips, which kissing, closer contact seek
And eloquently thus their passion speak !
Mute intercourse, the language of desire,
Enchanting prelude, organ of love's fire :
Yet for a trice, 't was fitting to forget
This concert sweet, this exquisite duet.

Fair Agnes' hand assists to disengage
The cumbrous garments of the impatient page,
Who casts aside his troublesome attire,
Disguise averse to nature and desire,
To mortals in the golden age unknown,
Shunned by the God who still hath naked gone.
Ye Gods, what treasures ! Is it Flora say,

With Youthful Zephyrus in wanton play?
Or is it Psyche fair caressing Love?
Or is it Venus in the Idalian grove
Clips fast the boy afar from the emprise
Of garish day, while Mars is wrath and sighs?

The Gallic Mars, Charles, in the same chateau
Sighed at this moment with his friend Bonneau,
He eats regretful, drinks with sadness 'rayed.
An ancient valet, garrulous by trade,
To render gay his Highness taciturn,
Informed the king, who nothing sought to learn
How two young beauties, one robust and bold,
With raven locks, and mien that Mars foretold,
The other gentler, coloured-fresh, blue-eyed,
Slept at that moment at the other side.
Astonished Charles, suspicious at this strain,
Bade him repeat it o'er again ;
What were the eyes, the mouth and what the hair,
The converse tender, and the modest air,
Of that loved object which his heart adored ;
'T is her at length, his all in life restored.
Assured he is and quits the gay repast :
"Bonneau, adieu, I seek her arms at last."
He spoke, he flew,—reckless of noise was he,

Being a king, he sought not mystery.

Full of his joy, he called through every ward,
On Agnes' name, till Agnes frightened heard.
The happy couple on their couch of bliss,
Were much embarrassed: how escape from this?
When lo! the youthful page his card thus played:
Beside the canopy, a niche displayed
Itself, wherein an oratory stood
A *pocket-altar*; whereto any could
(If any wanted such a thing at all)
For fifteen pence a good Franciscan call.
And in the altar-piece, device so quaint,
Was scooped a niche which waited for its saint.
This niche, from eyes profane was covered o'er
With a green curtain, wide displayed before.
What did Monrose? with happy thought impress'd,
He of the sacred place became possess'd;
And leaping up, behind the curtain goes,
To play the saint, *sans* doublet, cloak or hose.

Charles flew; no barrier his course could check,
Entering, he clasped his loved one round the neck,
And would indulge in many nameless things,
Which lovers claim, especially when kings.

The curtained saint at such a sight was shocked
He made a noise and straight the altar rocked,
The Prince approaching, then his hand applied,
He felt a body and retiring cried :
"Love and Saint Francis, Satan, Lord of night!"
Half overcome by jealousy and fright
He pulled, and on the altar down pell-mell,
With clattering sound the rods and curtains fell ;
Squatted behind, a figure shewed as fair
As nature ever formed with partial care.
His shoulders turned in modesty displayed
That part, which Caesar shamelessly betrayed,
To Nicomedes in his youthful prime,
That part which the Greek hero of old time
So much admired in his Hephestion,
Which Adrian set up in the Pantheon :
On heroes' frailty, Heaven, compassion !

If my kind reader has not lost the thread
Of my narration, he will mind to have read,
How in the British camp courageous Joan
Traced on his baser part (I blush to own)
With hand conducted by Saint Denis keen
Three lilies as expert as e'er were seen.
This rump, these lilies, three within a shield,

Astonished Charles : his knees began to yield ;
He thought Beelzebub had played the trick ;
Struck with repentance and with sorrow sick,
Devoured by grief and fear, fair Agnes faints,
Which much the anguish of her lord augments :
"Succour," he cried, whilst her soft hand he pressed,
"Hither come all, alas, my love's possest !"
The confessor, by the king's cries upset,
Deserts his supper not without regret ;
Bonneau came puffing up, quite out of breath ;
Joan waking, seized with hand that dealt in death,
That sword which ever brought her victory,
And sought the place from whence had come the cry,
While 'spite of all, Cutendre's ancient lord
Slept at his ease, and never heard a word.

CANTO XIII.

The sally from the Castle of Cutendre — Combat between the Mid and John Chandos — Strange law of Combat to which the Maid is obliged to submit — Father Bonifoux's vision, and the miracle which saves the honour of Joan.

'T was just that brilliant season of the year,
When Sol, to ope anew his bright career,
Curtails the night to lengthen out the day ;
Delighted, as he slow expands his ray,
To view the happy climate of our land ;
Till gained the Tropic, lo ! he takes his stand :
O ! great St. John, thy festive morn now smiled,
First of all Johns ! who preached in desert wild,
And crying everywhere, in olden day,
Proclaimed the path, where man's salvation lay ;
Thee do I love and serve, O herald great !
Another John, though, had the better fate
To travel to the country of the moon

With Astolphe, giving reason's gracious boon
To Paladin, Angelica's lover true :
(O, John the second, give me back mine too !)
Thou, patron of that singer rare and bright
Ferrara's lords' perpetual delight
Who didst forget the sallies terse which he,
In comic couplets dared address to thee ;
Extend supporting succour to my song ;
I need such aid ; for well thou knowst the throng
Is far less tolerant, and far more rude,
Than was that age with genius deep imbued,
When Ariosto honoured Italy.
Against those surly sprites, O, succour me,
Who thunder 'gainst my light frivolity !
If jesting innocent, once on a while,
Happen my work with laughter to beguile,
I can be solemn, when it is required ;
Only, I would not make the reader tired.
Guide then my pen, and please convey for me,
To brother Denis all my courtesy.
As onward, haughty Joan with ardour hied,
She, through a lattice in the park, espied
Twice fifty palfreys, a right glittering troop
Of knights behind, each bearing dame on croup ;
Attended these by faithful squires who bore

All the appanages of dreadful war ;
An hundred bucklers that reflected bright
The quivering beams of Cynthia's silver light ;
An hundred golden helms which plumage shade,
And lances tipped with sharp and pointed blade,
And ribboned knots befringed with gold, I ween,
That pendant hung from weapon's point so keen :
Great Joan, alarmed at this unusual sight,
Believed Cutendre's walls begirt at night
By British vigilance ; but erred in this :
Warriors, like other folk, may judge amiss. *
Our heroine was often so deceived,
Nor had Saint Denis e'er this fault relieved.
'Twas not of Albion's sons an hardy band,
Which thus surprised Cutendre's smiling land ;
But Dunois, who from Milan safe had flown,
The great Dunois, to Joan of Arc well known ;
And La Trimouille with Dorothy, his fair,

* *V ariant: Warriors, like other folk, may judge amiss.*
Thus Ajax, and a certain general,
A Duke, a wit, statesman and *maréchal* ;
One by Scamander's stream, one by the Rhine,
Mistook, 't is said, upon a morning fine,
For enemies a flock of snow-white sheep ;
But none the less their glory does not sleep.
'T was not of Albion's sons, *etc.*

With love and joy transported, happy pair!
And in her case the joy was justified:
Her faithful La Trimouille was by her side, *
Love urged him on and honour was his guide;
She followed him, nor deigned from truth to stir,
And feared no more the grand Inquisitor.

This splendid troop, in pairs arriving right,
Within the castle were received at night;
Joan thither flew: the king who saw her go
Conceived she hurried on to meet the foe;
He hastened after, eager to engage
And left once more his Agnes with the Page.
O happy page! more blest in everything
Than the most mighty and most Christian king,
How piously you thanked the saint whose place
You occupied with such becoming grace!
But now 't is needful you your clothes resume,
Pourpoint and variegated hose assume;

* Variant: *Her faithful La Trimouille was by her side,*
La Trimouille, so tender and so true;
How oft for him her eyes would tears bedew;
He who had sought her mid much martial strife,
And having found her, stayed with her for life.
This splendid troop, etc.

Agnes, with timorous hand affording aid,
Which, from the toil direct, full often strayed.
How many kisses on her lips of rose
Were pressed, as she was dressing up Monroe !
While her bright eyes beholding him in dress
Seemed still desirous of voluptuousness !
Monroe in silence to the park then hied ;
The saintly confessor, in secret sighed :
That such a handsome youth should e'en pass by,
Was certainly distraction for the eye.
The tender Agnes then composed her mien,
In eyes, air, port and speech, a change was seen ;
To join his monarch Bonifoux was led,
Encouraging, consoling, thus he said :
"Within the niche an envoy from on High,
Came to announce from the supremest sky,
That Albion's baneful power anon will bend,
And Gallia's sufferings soon shall have an end.
Shortly the king shall victory achieve."
Charles credence yielded ; anxious to believe.
This argument was favoured by the Maid :
"Accept," she cried, "this precious Heavenly aid.
Come, let us, mighty Prince, rejoin the camp,
Where your long absence has infused a damp."

Dunois and La Trimouille, who wavered not,
Of this advice were partisans most hot,
And by these heroes Dorothy outright
Was duly ushered to the royal sight.
Agnes embraces her, then, one and all,
The noble party leave the Baron's hall.
But Heavenly Wisdom oft looks down and smiles
On sublunary cares and human wiles.
In order due this gallant troop appears,
Accomplished dames and warlike cavaliers.
By Agnes' side the amorous monarch rode,
Her hand was locked in his and still she showed
How much her honour was concerned to prove,
She still was constant to her royal love.
Yet shame to tell! the involuntary glance
Oft turned aside and eyed the page askance.
The worthy confessor brought up the rear,
And chaunted forth the proper form of prayer,
Yet paused beholding such attractions nigh,
Gazing alike with a distracted eye,
On page, king, Agnes and his breviary.
Glittering in arms, the gallant court's gay pride,
Trimouille with Dorothea by his side,
Came prancing forward; while the gentle dame,
Inebriate with joy, avowed her flame,

Called him her dear deliverer, her guide,
The idol of her heart, her joy, and pride.
Whereto he answered : " When the wars shall cease,
On my estates we'll spend our days in peace ;
Adored one, I am mad for love of you,
When shall we both be settled in Poitou?"

Not far from these appeared redoubted Joan,
Doughty supporter of the Gallic throne,
Whose front was decked with velvet bonnet green
Enriched with gold, o'er which a plume is seen ;
Her strapping charms the donkey fierce betstrode
Cant'ring and chatting, as with Charles she rode ;
She bridled oft and heaved a tender sigh
When she perceived the brave Dunois draw nigh.
Her fancy still portrayed in liveliest hue,
His nakedness, which once assailed her view.

Bonneau, with patriarchal beard arrayed,
Perspiring, blowing, closed the cavalcade.
Oh ! precious servant of so great a king,
His care was such, he thought of everything ;
Two mules he furnished, charged with vintage old,
Long sausages, pies luscious to behold,
And fowls, or trussed to roast, or cooked and cold.

Onward they went, when Chandos full of rage,
Who sought fair Agnes and his truant page,
And sword in hand the fugitives pursued,
Met our gay heroes near a little wood.
Of sturdy Britons with Joan Chandos came
A gallant troop, in numbers much the same,
With those attendant on the amorous king ;
But different looks and different arms they bring :
Nor were there heaving bosoms nor bright eyes.
"O, ho !" cries he, in voice that thunders high,
"You gallant Gauls, with hate whom I pursue,
Ye have three girls to go along with you,
While I, the Chandos, have not even one:
To combat, let the will of fate be done,
And fortune show who best can face the foe,
Who surest wounds, who strikes the deadliest blow. *
Who best can make the legions dance,
Who strongest is with battle-axe and lance ;
Come on, your bravest warrior I defy,
Against this arm his boasted strength to try ;

* Variant: *Who surest wounds, who strikes the deadliest blow,*
The fair love those who best to combat ride ;
Then leave it to our valour to decide.
Come on your bravest warrior, etc.

Let him who proves superior skill in arms,
Enjoy the nymph who most his fancy charms.”
Piqued at the cynic offer of the knight,
The King stepped forth, and claimed the champion’s right.
But Dunois cried : “Great sire, let me advance,
To vindicate the cause of love and France.”
He rushed to arms ;—Trimouille arrests his course
And claims an equal right to test his force.
Each to the honour of the fight pretends
Till kind Bonneau, to pacify the friends,
Proposed by lot the question to decide,
As in heroic times was often tried : *
E’en in some modern commonwealths we find
The dice decide who best may rule mankind.
Did I but dare, in these my flights so high
Quote some whom mortal men would ne’er deny,
I’d state that such was saint Mathias’ case,
Who by this means of Judas gained the place.
Fat Bonneau takes the box, he quakes and sighs ;
For Charles he fears ; he tosses, throws the dies ;

* Variant: *As in heroic times was often tried* ;
Matthias, who had apostolic grace,
By cast of dice, of Judas won the place :
E’en in some modern commonwealths, etc.

St. Denis from the rampart of the skies,
Regards the warriors with paternal eyes ;
On Maiden and on Donkey bends his glance ;
'Twas he directed what we construe—*chance*,
Which proved propitious :—Joan obtained the lot.
Joan, it was time to make that cast forgot,
That wicked hazard, when the cordelier
Raffled thy beauties with the muleteer.
Joan to the monarch sped, to arms then flew,
And modestly behind a hedge withdrew
To doff her petticoat and, eke unlace
And on her limbs, her sacred armour place,
Prepared all ready by her faithful squire ;
Her ass then vaulted fraught with glowing fire—
Closing her knees, she brandishes her lance,
Evoking tutelary saints of France,
And those eleven thousand maidens dead
In honour of their precious maiden-head.
As for John Chandos—faith in him was faint,
He went to fight invoking ne'er a saint.

John, to encounter Joan, with fury drove ;
Equal the valour was of each that strove ;
In iron cased and barbed, the ass and steed,
Goaded by spur eclipsed the lightning's speed ;

'Gainst either hardened head, how dire the stroke,
Front against front, piece-meal the armour broke ;
Fire flashed, the courser's blood with crimson seal
Dyed flying remnants of the battered steel ;
From the fell shock the echoes wide resound
As all the coursers' eight hoofs spring from ground,
And both unhorsed at once the riders lay.

Thus when two ivory balls suspended play,
By cords of equal length, with force alike
In arch cycloidal they move and strike,
They clash, they flatten at the dreadful knock,
When each remounts urged by repellant shock,
Their weight augmented in a like degree,
As each redoubles in velocity.

The gazers judged each courser dead outright,
And either party trembled for its knight.

Now Gaul's august protectress, own we must,
Had not the flesh so firm, nor so robust
Bones so well knit, muscles or limbs so tight,
As had the proud John Chandos, England's knight.
Compelled in dread encounter to resign
The equilibrium, central point and line,
Her quadruped those parts to heaven displayed
Which Joan unveiled upon the verdant glade,
Her well turned back, plump thighs, in one word all—

She fell in short as maidens ought to fall.

When Chandos saw his adversary low
He thought Dunois or Charles had been his foe,
Sudden he stoops, his conquest he surveys ;
The helm removed to Chandos' view displays
The humid lustre of two big, black eyes,
That languishingly shone ; he next unties
The strings that bound her cuirass to her breast ;
He sees with rapture not to be exprest,
Ye Gods ! two breasts as plump as they are round,
Elastic, firm, with blushing rose-buds crowned.
'Tis said that then, his voice he deigned to raise,
And for the first time breathed to Heaven his praise.
"The famous Maid of France is mine," he cried,
"Content am I, revenge is satisfied,
Grace be to Heav'n, I've doubly earned the blow
Which prostrate lays the haughty beauty low.
Let Denis look and blame me from above,
I'll use my double rights—of Mars and Love." *

* Variant: "*I'll use my double rights of Mars and Love.*"
Then as towards his squire John Chandos turned ;
"Her head," he said, "is still a little turned.
Two arms have I to combat and to kill,
I'd better use the third to cure the ill."
His squire exclaimed, *etc.*

His squire exclaimed: "Proceed, my Lord, proceed,
Proclaim the might of England by the deed.
In vain would Lourdis strike our souls with dread,
In vain he vaunts this sacred maiden head,
This grand Palladium of the Gallic state,
This Latian buckler, that secures their fate,
Shall mock the efforts of our love and hate:
'Tis yours, my Lord! by one stout effort try
To wrest the *Oriflamme* and victory."

"Yes," answered Chandos, "and I have in view
The best of gifts, glory and pleasure too."
Shocked at this language of the British chief,
Joan chastely prayed to Denis for relief,
Made vows a thousand—all there was to do.
Dunois, who kept heroic deeds in view,
Would in its course this triumph vile arrest;
But how proceed? In every state the best
Was to submit to combat's stern behest;
The heavenly ass, as on the ground he lay,
With hanging ears and looks of deep dismay,
Confus'dly, languishingly, viewed the scene,
And haughty Chandos's triumphant mien.
Long had he felt for Joan the softest fire,
The purest flames of delicate desire;
A chastely noble, sentimental glow,

But little known to asses here below. *

The confessor of Charles was fraught with fear,
Hearing the speech of England's graceless peer ;
But trembled most lest his royal penitent,
His passions roused by such a strange event,
To assert his country's honour and his own,
With Agnes should engage ; nor he alone :
Trimouille might feel the sympathetic flame,
And he and Dorothea do the same.
Beneath an oak he knelt himself in prayer,
And pondered with a meditative air,
The cause, effects, originality
Of the sweet sin that some call lechery.

While thus the monk pursued his reverie,
He saw a vision full of mystery ;
Resembling much that visionary view
Of Jacob, blessed for having spoke untrue ;
Whose skin was smooth, who had a frugal mind,
And sold his lentils of the Jewish kind.
Old father Jacob ! mystery sublime !

* Variant: *But little known to asses here below ;*
Deeply he sighs when the three arms appear.
The Confessor of Charles was fraught with fear, etc.

Euphrates near, one night upon a time,
A thousand rutty rams, in sleep he saw,
Upon their ewes obeying nature's law.
More pleasant sights awaited the monk's eyes :
He saw, advancing to the same surprise,*
The heroic persons of posterity,
Admired the charms in all variety,
Of beauties who in combats full of mirth
Chained and enslaved the masters of the earth.
Each was established at her hero's side,
With Paphian reins his willing steps to guide.
Thus when returning Zephyrs gently play
And wake the flowers that deck the lap of May,

* Variant: *More pleasant sights awaited the monk's eyes.*
He plainly saw, or else he thought he saw
What never other Saint had seen before ;
He saw advancing to the same surprise
Before the feet of Agneses to be,
The demi-gods of far posterity ;
The diverse charms he thoroughly observed
Of all these beauties whose address subserved
To lead the masters of the world a dance.
Beneath her hero each one would advance ;
They ran together, talking mighty big,
Each had her gallop, and each one her jig ;
And each her mount, at her own fancy drove ;
All were accomplished at this game of love.
Thus when returning Zephyrs, *etc.*

The feathered songsters agitate the groves,
And recommence their half-forgotten loves ;
The gaudy butterflies on beds of flowers,
Caress the partners of their happy hours ;
E'en savage beasts the genial warmth invades
And softened lions seek the conscious shades.

Francis the First now in his dream appears,
The flower of monarchs and of cavaliers ;
Whom Anne d'Etampes, a willing slave detains,
Forgetful of Pavia's shameful chains.
And Charles the Fifth, who bay with myrtle shared,
And for *la Maure* as well as *Flamande* cared.
Just Heaven, what monarchs ! in this glorious course,
One gained the gout—the other—something worse.
Diana's near, he sees her wrinkles move,
As she is stirred by the sweet joys of love, *
When in her arms she fondly rocks to rest
The second Henry, panting on her breast.

* Variant: *As she is stirred by the sweet joys of love,*
When in her withered and uncomely arms
Blinded with passion, he finds all the charms :
The second Henry, erudite in vice,
So that of beauty he learned all the price.
The fickle Charles, etc.

The fickle Charles the Ninth next mounts the stage,
Who laughing leaves his Chloris for a page,
Heedless of warfare which Parisians wage.
But ah ! what feats our friar's vision told
When Borgia's amorous pastimes stood unrolled ;
Oh, how shall I in numbers meet express
The countless pastimes of His Holiness ? *
There, with Vanoza joined in converse sweet,
His triple crown neglected at his feet ;
While later, the same Sanctity he spies,
Who for his daughter Lucrece yearns and sighs.
O mighty Leo ! O transcendent Paul !
You rival monarchs, nay ! surpass them all.
Henry the Great, to you alone they yield,
Victorious both in Mars and Venus' field ;
By Gabrielle's love made more illustrious far,
Than by full twenty years of toils and war. †

* Variant: *The countless pastimes of His Holiness ?*
Who turned his back and pulled his robes apart,
And with Vanoza played the female part.
While later on, etc.

† Variant: *Than by full twenty years of toils and war.*
The monk saw Venice Doges and the rest,
The haughty Dukes who Pisa sore oppressed,
Who with the goats took pleasure in the mire ;
But left them to their infamous desire.
A glorious spectacle, etc.

A glorious spectacle now rose to view,
The age of pleasure and of wonders too,
Great *Louis* and his sumptuous court now move,
Where all the arts were instigate by love.
Love reared the structure of Versailles renowned,
By Love the dazzled multitudes were crowned,
From flowery couch Love formed great *Louis'* throne,
Spite of the clash of arms and battle's groan ;
Love, to the chief and sun of all his court
Led the most charming rivals to resort,
Impatient all and glowing with desire ;
First *Mazarin*'s fair niece, her eyes on fire,
Then generous and tender *Vallière*,
Then *Montespan*, more proud and debonnaire.
One yielding to ecstatic rapture's power,
The other waiting pleasure's promised hour. *

* Variant: *The other waiting pleasure's promised hour.*
A metamorphosis his vision had ;
In long black cloak lugubriously clad,
Love casts aside the roses from his hair
And hides his forehead 'neath a bonnet square.
White silly *Scruple*, icy *Decency*.
Conceal his traits of smiling infancy.
Him follows *Hymen* on mysterious feet :
His torches twain flame out with equal heat,
Fires without glow, whose chilly flames and white
Fatigue the places they pretend to light.
By these sad candles' flickering unkind,

Now mark the Regency's auspicious time,
The pleasant reign of license had its prime,

With pimps and eke a priest, who go behind,
Great Louis, poppy-crowned and cassock led
Proceeds his ancient Harridan to wed.

He, who of Bourbons, far surpassed the rest,
The monk sees cozened by a flabby breast,
Upon a couch he stirs his aged nag ;
Love is in tears and all his faithful tag :
To Paphos all the games and laughter fly,
Paris, the Court are all for piety.

A lechery as brutal as intense
Is all the pleasure now that's left to sense.
The air grows dense, and cynic wits maintain
Diogenes', not Epicurus' reign.

In deep extremes of drunkenness obscure
The courtier seeks his freedom to procure ;
Cassocked Hercules, Priapus in a cloak,
Upon the palace lay their obscene yolk ;
To this disgusting pair all hommage tends,
Whom sheer brutality alone commends,
Beauty and grace at their good pleasure dance ;
Such is the end of gentle love in France,
When Providential care or Destiny,
The bigot king laid with his ancestry.

The monk then saw the Regent's happy time ;
The pleasant reign of license had its prime,
As folly tinkling loud her bells in hand
With lightsome step tripped over Gallia's land,
When pious men as simple fools appear,
Soft Argenton and joyous Parabère !
'T is through your care, Cythera's god once more,
In Orléans' palace, men again adore,
About his shrines once more the incense blows.

As folly, tinkling loud her bells in hand,
With lightsome step tripped over Gallia's land,
Where to devotion not a soul was prone,
And every act save penitence was known,
While the kind Regent from his palace walls,
To gay voluptuous mirth the people calls.
This charming bidding, one responsive greets,
Young Daphne—she that rules the courtiers' suites ;
Who from the Luxemburg, wherein she dwells,
Whom Bacchus and the god of festivals,
Lead to the bed, Love going as her page. *

The god of Taste, the one compeer Love knows,
To genius seeks to join all charms that please.
Fauns and Priapus, brutal Hercules
Are forced to make the Convents their retreat,
Nor dare in merry France to take their seat.
While the kind Regent, etc.

* Variant: *Lead to the bed, Love going as her page.*
Not far from Paris, 'neath superb *Romaine*...
But let me pause — to write in such a strain
Might bring to writer somewhat scurvy meed ;
Of more than one *Bonneau* one might have need ;
We live in times with swords and bullies rife,
And I, a weakling, hate the sound of strife.
I'll hold me in from flattering though ye be,
And — hold my tongue — then reader pardon me !
O *Rambouillet* ! dim and mysterious place !
Meudon ! Choisy ! delicious homes of grace !

But let me pause—for of this latter age
I dare not point in verse the semblance true,

Which pleasure, Love himself and merry sport
Have oft preferred to Cythera's resort ;
On all your mysteries, by Lignière blamed
And by its prudent rector ne'er proclaimed,
My most chaste muse is forced to hold her tongue.
I speak of treating of the age now young ;
Time present as the Lord's own ark we see ;
Who dares invade it with a touch too free,
By Heaven is punished with a lethargy.
Let me be silent then ; yet if I dare
Describe thy beauties, thou transcendent fair,
Of all the fair, the noblest, simplest *belle*,
O sweet and soft and dimpled *La Tournelle* !
Before your round plump knees, Ah ! might I dare
That incense breathe which Venus well might share,
Or sing the exalted destiny displayed,
For which the brown *Flavacourt* often prayed ;
If I should sing that sweet and tender knot,
That bond so dear, though Christian it was not,
Which by an ancient Eminence formed at first,
A bigot prelate later broke and cursed,
Resoldered later by the mighty king,
In spite of a fool's precious sermoning ;
If I Love's weapons in due order laid
If I — but no, there shall be nothing said ;
Your charms, above me lie, so far o'erhead. •
At length, the dreaming monk, of sable hue,
Beheld at pleasure what I dare not view.
His eyes, though modest, somewhat agitate,
The spectacle celestial, comtemple
Of all these kings accoupled in a row :
The Second *Charles*, with *Portsmouth* fair below,

Those flattering charms too potent ills pursue
Time present as the Lord's own ark we see ;
Who dares invade it with a touch too free
By Heaven is punished with a lethargy.
I will be mute,—yet, reader, might I dare
Of *belles* that live, I'd trace the fairest fair,
Of tender creatures, noble, touching, sweet,
And more than Agnes constant and discreet ;
Before your round, plump knees,—Ah, might I dare
That incense breathe, which Venus well might share,
If I Love's weapons in due order laid,
If I the soft, the tender link displayed ;
If I—but no, there shall be nothing said,
Your charms, above me, lie so far o'erhead.
At length the dreaming monk, of sable hue,

The second *George* with buxom Yarmouth lies ;
While *Portugal* — the king of pieties,
Mixes his prayers to God with amorous sighs ;
And royal *Victor* similarly yearns
For son and love and honour turn by turns.
But when he sees midst royal chambering,
Betwixt his page and Iris, that quaint king,
Who was an author, albeit somewhat fierce,
Caressing buttocks which he tries to pierce,
(Him, whom the North has honoured and compared
With Solomon, just as the Germans dared
Declare their Emperor Caesar in their eyes)
"Alas ! if grandees, *etc.*"

Beheld at pleasure what I dare not view.
His eyes, though modest, somewhat agitate,
The spectacle celestial contemplate
Of lovers twain arranged in a row:
The second *Charles* with *Portsmouth* fair below,
The second *George* with buxom *Yarmouth* lies.
"Alas! if grandes of the earth," he cries,
"In two and two perform such practices,
If such the universal law of all,
Why should I murmur if John Chandos fall
Upon the beauties of his nut-brown maid?
Let not the will of Heaven be gainsaid!
"Amen, amen." A swoon his sense destroyed:
He thought that all he'd seen, he had enjoyed.

But distant was it from St. Denis' thought,
That he should see performed what Chandos sought,
That Joan and France should hear destruction's word:
Friend reader, thou hast doubtless sometimes heard,
That short clothes anciently by tags were braced:
A dreadful custom this and much misplaced;
So cruel a resource no Saint should try,
Unless in case of great emergency.
The hapless Swain no longer fondly burns,
But hot desire to icy coldness turns;

Consumed, unnerved, unable to enjoy,
He fails astonished on the brink of joy ;
E'en as a flower that scorching rays have spent,
Its head reclining and its stalk down-bent,
Seeketh in vain moist vapours to inhale,
And waft its fragrance to the passing gale ;
Such was the method Denis took to blight
The valiant Briton in his conquest's right.*
Joan thus escaping from her conqueror crost,
Regains those senses which himself has lost.
Then cries with terrible imposing tone,
"Invincible thou art not—straightway own
That in the most important fight of all,
God helps thee not but lets thy courser fall :
Some other day I will avenge my land.
Denis so wills it, and he is my stand ;
At Orléans' walls thy prowess 'shall be tried."
"I'll meet thee there," the great Chandos replied :
"Maid or no maid ! In George I do believe,
And there I vow mine error to retrieve."

* Variant: *The valiant Briton in his conquest's right.*
Chandos all sweating, like a bullock hot,
With finger seeks if Joan's a girl or not ;
"The devil take," he cries, "the foolish sword,"
And soon the Devil takes him at his word !

CANTO XIV

*How John Chandos would abuse the devout Dorothy —
Combat between La Trimouille and Chandos — How the
doughty Chandos is overcome by Dunois.*

O thou voluptuousness, in whom we see
Nature's true source—Venus' bright Deity,
By Epicurus erst in Greece revered,
'Fore whom, through Chaos darkness disappeared,
Who givest life and brings fecundity,
And soft emotion and felicity,
To those imnumerable tribes, that live
By thy command, and at thy call* revive ;
Thou, painted as disarming, in thine arms,
Great Jove and Mars, the God of dire alarms ;
Thou, whose sweet smile can lull the thunders' dint,
Becalm the air, and 'neath whose foot's light print,
Soft pleasures spring that all the earth control,
Goddess descend : of blissful days the soul ;

Come in thy car, surrounded by thy loves,
While, with their downy wings thy constant doves
Awake the Zephyrs that afford thee shade,
As billing through the floods of air they wade:
Descend, the universe to animate,
And calm; while at thy voice, suspicion, hate
And dire *ennui*, than those, more noxious ill,
And dark and leering envy, blacker still,
Replunged by thee into the depths of Hell,
Shall there in chains eternal ever dwell.
Be all on fire; uniting at thy call,
Let universal love control us all,
To flames our codes and flimsy laws consign,
We only follow one; and that is thine.

O tender Venus! Guide to sure estate
The King of France who combats for his State.
And safe from every peril deign to guide
The lovely Agnes ever by his side.
In earnest, for those lovers I entreat
For Joan of Arc, no invocation's meet,
She's not yet subject to thy gentle sway:
'Tis Denis' part to lead her on her way;
A maiden she, the saint her patron friend.
To thy soft favours let me recommend

Trimouille the gallant and his Dorothy,
Let peace reward their sensibility ;
That 'neath her own true lover's fostering care,
No more her former enemies may dare,
Nor sad disaster longer be her share. *
And thou Comus ! due recompense obtain
For Bonneau, worthy seigneur of Tourraine,
He, who pacific truce knew how to end,
'Twixt cynic Chandos and King Charles, his friend ;
And planned most dexterously each force should bide,
On either margin of the current's tide,

* Variant: *Nor sad disaster longer be her share.*

Venus, it was a muleteer's nice part
To form of gentle Corisande the heart.
And since that day, informed and soft and nice
She's ready at thy shrines to sacrifice,
Knows how to please, take pleasure and submit
To all the bonds for her condition fit.
Thus clumsy craftsmen often understand
To turn and polish with a rough, black hand,
The gold and rubies, jasper, ivory
Which form some gallant horseman's panoply.
To those fine French of whose most martial knights
Each one gallantry with daring unites,
To that possessor of good sense, Bonneau,
The fair both honours of the castle show,
And then, pacific truce knows how to end
'Twixt cynic Chandos and King Charles, his friend ;
And planned most dexterously each force, *etc.*

That no reproach or quarrel should ensue,
To right and left, Loire's stream between the two.
He to the Englishmen his cares made known,
Rend'ring their manners, tastes and wants his own ;
A big sirloin, with butter seasoned fine,
Plum-puddings and a noble Garonne wine,
All these were offered him ; more dainty meat,
Ragouts with sauces which the lips entreat,
With partridges, their red leg offering,
For the fair dames, the seigneurs and the king.
Proud Chandos, therefore, having quaffed his drink,
Proceeded onward o'er the Loire's clear brink,
Swearing the first time he could Joan attain
He'd use the rights of such as victory gain ;
Meantime, he with his pretty page returns,
While Joan, near great Dunois, for combat burns.

The King of France, with guards in bright blue gear,
Agnes in front, the confessor in rear ;
Had now a league proceeded on the way,
O'er verdant meads bedecked with flowrets gay ;
By limpid Loire, its banks extending wide,
With tranquil current and inconstant tide.

On boats appeared, supporting half-worn planks,

A bridge that served to join the river's banks,
And at the farther end a chapel lay.

'Twas Sunday, and a voice was heard to pray,
An hermit's voice that through the valley rung,
Chaunting the Mass; a child responsive sung.
One Mass, the King of France and his escort,
Had heard already ere they left the fort;
But Dorothy must now hear this at least,
Her pious faith had been so much increased,
Since Heaven, the guardian of innocence
The Bastard sent to fight in her defence,
And so protected that true love which trusts.
She quick dismounts, her fluttered dress adjusts,
Three times, from holy source her forehead signs,
Folds hands, bows neck and pious knees inclines;
The holy hermit seeing her come there,
Turned round, confused, and quite forgot his prayer.
He should have said, "Let's pray for Heavenly grace,"
But cried instead, "Oh, what a heavenly face!"

To this same shrine with no devout intent,
But for mere pastime British Chandos went,
And head erect, with high, imperious air,
Saluted, as he passed, Trimouille's fair,
Then whistling still, he knelt himself behind;

No *pater*, not an *ave* crossed his mind.

With heart contrite, and grace within her eyes,
Prostrate was Dorothy, in charming guise ;
Her forehead low, her buttocks rather high,
Her coats were raised from inadvertency,*
Discovering still to Chandos' ravished eyes,
Such legs and such rotundity of thighs,
Such polished ivory, so smooth, so white,
So exquisitely moulded for delight,
As once Diana showed the Theban boy,
Who paid full dear that ecstasy of joy.
Chandos, who of oraison made small case,
Felt a desire, befitting not that place
So consecrate ; and swift his hand steals in
Beneath the coat which hid that satin skin.
I would not with a cynic's pencil draw,
To strike my reader's modest sight with awe,
Nor e'en presume suggestion of the extent,
To which the audacious hand of Chandos went.

* Variant: *Her coats were raised from inadvertency,*
Offering to Chandos's admiring gaze,
Two legs which once more Love, in our own days,
Has formed again for *Pompadour* to bear,
(For Louis ever may God keep her fair,
And some day send her to conventional care!)
Such legs and such rotundity, etc.

Meantime Trimouille, who missed the lovely Fair,
The constant object of his amorous care,
Forth to the chapel straight his steps inclined ;—
Oh, whither will not love direct the mind !
Trimouille arrived just as the priest turned round,
And Chandos insolent his rude hand found
Near the most perfect of all backs below,
As fainting Dorothy with terror's glow
Emitted piercing screams, loud, echoing wide ;
Fain would I have some modern painter guide
His pencil to portray this scene so strange,
And on their faces four with skill arrange
The fell astonishment that mantled there :—
With cries the knight of Poitou rent the air :
“O durst thou,” quoth he, “most discourteous knight,
Impious profaner of each sacred rite,
These holy walls with profanation blast ?”
With bantering air, as haughty look he cast,
Adjusting dress—when near the door he drew,
Fierce Chandos said : “What is it, sir, to you ?
Are you the sexton ? Is this church your care ?”
“A higher charge,” Trimouille replied, “I bear ;
I am the favoured lover of the Fair,
Whose habit is to deal out vengeance meet,
On those who dare her honour to entreat.”

"In such a case you well might risk your own,"
The Briton cried, "to each the other's known,
And what he's worth, and how John Chandos may
Ogle a back, but ne'er his own display."

For jeering Briton and the handsome Gaul,
Were steeds caparisoned for combat's thrall ;
Each from his squire receives his spear and shield,
And takes his station in the dusty field.
Firm in their seats, terrific they appear,
Pass and repass, and tilt in full career.
Nor tears nor sighs of Dorothy can charm
Or check the blow of either's direful arm :
Her tender lover cried, "My lady true,
I combat to avenge or die for you."
Wrongly he judged : his valour and his lance,
Glittered in vain for tender love and France.

Twice having pierced John Chandos' battered mail,
And well assured that victory would not fail,
His palfrey stumbled, rolling o'er his corse,
And plunging, struck his casque with dreadful force,
Inflicting on his front an ample wound ;
The crimson tide bedewed the verdant ground.
The hermit ran in haste the knight to bless,

In manus cried, and begged him to confess.
O Dorothy! then, what was thy despair,
Beside him kneeling, with a lifeless air,
Thine heavy heart could no more silence break;
But what thy words when thou, at last, couldst speak!
"My lover dear! Oh, have I killed thee—I,
The assiduous partner of thy Destiny?
Who never should thy side revered have left,
For quitting thee, of comfort I'm bereft:
This chapel ruined me, wherein I strayed,
And my Trimouille, and Love as well, betrayed,
Seeking to hear two masses in one day!"
So speaking, melted she in tears away.

Chandos, at his success, gave vent to jeers.
"My pink of Frenchmen, flower of cavaliers,
And also you, devoutest Dorothy,
Adoring couple, shall my prisoners be;
Of knightly combats, 't is the laws' decree.*
Some fleeting moments Agnes was my prey,
And 'neath me, Joan, the captive maiden lay;

* Variant: *Of knightly combats, 't is the laws' decree.*
Come, I desire this vanquished hero bold,
Captive and cuckold in a day to hold.
But Heaven is just, *etc.*

I must avow, I failed in duty there,
I blush to say it—but with you, my Fair,
I'll well regain whatever then I lost.
Trimouille himself may witness if I boast.”
The hermit, knight and Dorothy with fear,
Tremble all three, such horrid threats to hear.
So to a cavern's depths when dreads oppress,
Confused, entreating, flies the shepherdess ;
Her flock in trembling owns the rueful cause,
The poor dog struggling in the wolf's fell jaws.

But Heaven is just, though in its vengeance slow ;
Such insolence could not unpunished go ;
John Chandos' many sins reiterate,
Who boys and maidens oft would violate,
His blasphemous and unrepentant days,
His impiousness, at last, Death's angel weighs.
The great Dunois had from the other side
The combat and Trimouille's defeat espied,
He saw a damsel with disordered charms,
Clasping the languid hero in her arms,
Close by the hermit muttering on the ground,
While British Chandos wheeled triumphant round.
Fired at this sight he gives his steed the rein,
And quick as lightning darts across the plain.

'Twas Albion's custom then, that foul or fair,
All objects should their appellations bear ;
Having the bridge's barrier now past through,
Straight to the conqueror our Dunois flew,
When these rude accents struck his haughty ear :
"Son of a whore !" he heard, or seemed to hear.
"Yes," he exclaimed with pride, "that name is mine,
Such bore Alcides, Bacchus the divine,
Perseus the happy, Romulus the grand,
Who purged the earth of rapine's fateful band ;
'Tis in their name, I'll do as much with you.
Remember how a Norman, bastard too,
With hand victorious made England fall
Then O, ye sons of Thunder, Bastards all,
Direct my lance, each doughty blow decree,
Honour commands, avenge yourselves and me !"
This prayer was hardly fitting, 't will be said ;
The hero was in fable so well read ;
For him the Bible lore less charm possessed ;
He spoke, he flew ; the golden trowel pressed ;
The armed teeth are urged, until they bleed
The noble haunches of his fiery steed ;
The first blow of his barbed lance amain
John Chandos struck, and burst the links in twain,
And scales are shattered of his armour bright,

Where the steel helm is joined to corselet light.
The gallant Briton deals a lusty blow
Full on the brazen buckler of his foe ;
The buckler rings, but guiltless of a wound,
The weapon turns oblique. The shores resound :
With rage redoubled, and increasing force,
The closing warriors grapple in their course.
In the fierce shock, each quits the horse he rode,
Who disencumbered of his shining load,
No longer guided by coercive rein,
Turns round in peace to graze upon the plain.
As in some fearful earthquake, one has spied
Two mighty rocks detached from mountain side,
Fall on each other with a thundrous sound ;
So, when these haughty warriors touched the ground,
They grip together in a fierce embrace ;
The shock awakes the echoes of the place,
The air is stirred with the nymphs' mournful sighs.
E'en so when Mars, before whom Terror flies,
Covered with blood, with fury in his eyes,
Descended raging from Olympus' height,
For Troy's proud walls to mix in mortal fight ;
And when the lance against him Pallas reared,
To her support an hundred kings appeared,
The fixed earth to its centre trembling stood,

Troubled was Acheron's infernal flood,
And turning pale, upon its margin dread,
E'en Pluto shook for empire of the dead.

Now fiercely from the ground both heroes rise,
And view each other with indignant eyes,
Forth from the sheath their shining swords they drew,
At every stroke their mail in shivers flew ;
The purple streams, that issued from each wound
Stained their bright armour, and bedewed the ground.
Anxious spectators the dire conflict viewed,
And round the combatants encircling stood ;
With neck outstretched, eyes fired, and mind intent,
They scarcely breathed while trembling for the event.
Courage augments, when crowds are standing by,
Keen spur of glory is the public eye ;
The former efforts of their martial might
Were but the preludes of this dreadful fight.
Achilles, Hector, demi-gods of old,
The Grenadiers more formidably bold,
And lions, who are redoubtable as well,
Less cruel are, less proud, implacable,
Less given to blood.—The Bastard ever great
Conjoining force with art and blessed by fate,
Seized on the Briton's arm, who struck awry,

And with a back-blow smote his glaive on high,
Then with a leg advanced, his point to gain,
Chandos o'erthrew upon the gory plain ;
Who, falling, dragged his foe alike to ground,
Where struggling clouds of dust their forms confound :
So in the sand for masterdom they move,
The Briton under and the Gaul above.

The noble victor, whom all virtues guide,
At least when fortune's favour's on his side,
His adversary pressing with one knee,
Exclaimed : "O, yield, yield Briton unto me!"
Whereto John Chandos cried, "An instant wait,
Hold !—it is thus, Dunois, I yield to fate."

As last resource of his infuriate mind,
A dagger drawing, he throws out behind
His sinewy arm, and striking while he swore,
Stabs in the neck his clement foe once more.
The mail uninjured there, and firm of joint
Bends back and blunts the dagger's murderous point ;
Dunois exclaimed : "Wretch, art resolved to die?
Then have thy will." He waited not reply,
But having no more scruple for his part
He plunged his bloody weapon in his heart.

Expiring Chandos, caught in throes of death,
"Son of a whore!" cried, with his latest breath.
So to the last, retained its character,
That proud, fierce heart which pity could not stir.
His eyes, his front infused dark horror's thrill,
His hand seemed threatening the victor still ;
His soul, so godless and implacable,
Had gone to brave the Devil down in Hell.
Thus died as he had lived, this British knight,
Slain by the Gallic chief in single fight.

To spoil the vanquished foe Dunois disdained,
Though by the usages of Greece maintained,
The law of arms ; Trimouille his mind engrossed ;
He lifted him, and once again could boast,
His aid had saved the days of Dorothy.
Along the road she helps him presently,
Her tender love, whom, when her hands surround,
He lives again and no more feels his wounds.
He feels but those of his adored one's eyes,
At them he looks ; his strength and force arise,
His lovely mistress, snatched from depths of woe,
Found in her breast reviving pleasure glow.
The tenderness of an agreeable smile
Begins to dawn—though still tears fall awhile.

So a black thunder-cloud one oft has seen,
Illuminate by ray of sun serene.
The Gallic king, his Agnes, fraught with grace,
And Joan illustrious, all by turn embrace
The happy Dunois, whose triumphant hand
Had love avenged and his own native-land ;
But chiefly was admired the modesty
Of his demeanour, of each repartee.
Easy it is, yet beautiful no less,
Modest to be, when one has won success.

Some jealousy Joan stifled in her breast,
Her heart upbraiding Destiny's behest.
That 'twas not granted to her maiden hand
Of such a miscreant to rid the land :
Bearing for ever two-fold wrongs in head,
Which, near Cutendre dyed her cheeks with red,
When braved by Chandos, in the combats' list,
She was, at once, thrown on her back—and missed.

CANTO XV

Of the great banquet at the Town-House of Orléans, followed by a general assault — Charles attacks the English — What befell the lovely Agnes and her travelling companions.

Malignant critics, you're despised by me,
Mine own defects I better know than ye.
In this fair history 'twas my design,
In gold engraven upon memory's shrine,
Nought to present but facts of high renown ;
Of how the king in Orléans won a crown,
By Love and Glory and the Maid sublime.
'Tis grievous thus to have misused my time,
Singing of Sire Cutendre and a page,
Of Grisbourdon and his licentious rage,
Of muleteer, and many an incident
That to my flowing theme does detriment.
But all these narratives that greet your eyes,
Were written down by Trimetus the wise,

I simply copy, not one trait invent ;
On facts, my reader, cast a look intent,
If sometimes your stern sense of gravity
Judges my sage with keen severity :
If at some traits your brow to scowl inclines,
The knife and pounce-box may efface my lines ;
Half of my verse obliterate if you will,
But oh ! respect that Truth which guides my quill.
O sacred Truth ! thou virgin ever pure,
When wilt thou reverence deserved procure ?
Divinity who mak'st us wise, why dwell,
In palace placed at bottom of a well ?
Ah, when wilt thou from out those depths appear ?
When will your learned men their voices rear,
From gall exempt, and from all flattery free,
To detail lives in full fidelity,
And all the exploits of our errant knights ?
Prudent was Ariosto in his flights,
When Archiepiscopal Turpin he cites,
For testimony of such sacred lore,
The faith of every reader must restore.

Anxious his future destiny to know,
Charles t'wards Orléans town was fain to go,
Surrounded by his knights, with gilded crest,

The brave Dunois for his advice he pressed ;
Like other kings, misfortune made him tame,
In happier times he was not quite the same.
Charles thought that Agnes followed in the rear
With Bonifax : well-pleased with hope so dear,
His glance the royal lover often turned,
And stopped to see if Agnes was discerned ;
And when Dunois presaging his success,
Named Orléans, the monarch named—Agnes.

The Bastard fortunate, whose prudent mind
To serve his country more and more inclined,
A fort beheld about the fall of eve,
Which Bedford's worthy Duke thought fit to leave ;
This structure near the beleaguered city lay ;
By Dunois ta'en, Charles there thought fit to stay ;—
When fortified anon the fort was seen,
Made by besieging host their magazine.
The God of blood who victory decides,
The pimply God who o'er the feast presides,
To stock this fort, their mutual cares combine ;
One cannon brings, the other noble wine :
War's dreadful implements are treasured here,
While all the apparatus of good cheer,
This little castle equally could show :

What a success for Dunois and Bonneau!

All Orléans town at such great news uprise,
And thanks to God return in solemn wise.

Te Deum they sing, with drone from *serpent-bass*,
Before the noble chieftains of the place ;
Next was the dinner served for judge and mayor,
The bishops, prebends, warriors all were there :
With glass in hand each falls upon the ground ;
Fire from the river casts its flashes round,
Illuminates the sombre, nocturn skies ;
The cannons thunder and the people's cries
Loudly announce that Charles is come again,
The kingdom he had lost soon to regain.

These shouts of glory and each blissful strain,
Were followed by the lengthened yells of pain,
As Bedford's name was heard from every breath ;
Fly to the walls ! Defend the breach—to death !
The Britons taking vantage of this chance,
When citizens engaged with wine and dance
Extolled their prince, in songs and couplets graced,
Beneath a gate two sausage forms they placed,
Not puddings such as Bonneau had in view,
When he produced them for a new *ragoût*,
But sausages, filled with the fatal force

Of gunpowder, which like the rapid course
Of lightning flash confuses heaven and earth ;
Dire, murderous engines of infernal birth,
Which in their iron entrails bear the brand,
Kneaded by Lucifer's destructive hand ;
By means of match, arranged with careful art,
The fell combustions quick as lightning part,
Spread, mount and to a thousand yards convey
Bars, hinges, bolts in splintery, torn away ;
Fierce Talbot onward rushes with full speed,
Success, rage, glory, love excite the deed, *
From far emblazoned on his arms, the eye,
In gold, a Louvet's cypher could descry.
For Louvet ever was the dame that taught
His soul to love, and swayed his haughty thought.
His was the wish to clasp her beauty's pride,
On walls demolished and with carnage dyed.

This handsome Briton, chosen child of war
Cries to the braves who follow 'neath his star :
"Go there, my gallant conquerors, go here,

* Variant: *Success, rage, glory, love excite the deed,*
For since long time he 'gan to pine away
For th'other half of President Louvet.
This handsome Briton, etc.

And flame and flashing steel cast everywhere,
Let's drink the wine of Orléans' coward race,
Their gold purloin, and all their wives embrace."
Not Cæsar's self, so eloquent of speech,
Such honour and audacity could preach
To martial spirits, as this fiery strain,
Instilling fury through the warlike train.
Upon the spot, where the gate as it burned,
For fumes of sombre smoke was not discerned,
A rampart high, of stone and turf appeared,
By order of La Hire and Poton reared,
From whence projected forth a parapet
Thickly with ranged artillery beset;
To check the first shock of th' assailant's rage,
And Bedford's fierce assault awhile engage.*
There straight La Hire and Poton took their stand,
Of citizens behind them strove a band;
The cannons roar,—the horrid order—*kill*
Re-echoes when the mouths of Hell are still,
And from their iron jaws the thunders cease,
Leaving incontinent the winds at peace;
Against the ramparts scaling ladders rose,

* Variant: *And Bedford's fierce assault awhile engage.*
Which vomits death and terror through the land.
There straight La Hire, etc.

Bearing already legions of the foes,
With foot on step, and grasped in hand the glave,
Each soldier urges on his fellow-brave.
In such a case, nor Poton nor La Hire
Forgot their foresight which all men admire,
They had foreseen each dire emergency,
And each resource of art resolved to try.
There was the molten pitch, the boiling oil ;
Of stakes, a forest to make foes recoil ;
Large cutting scythes in sharp array were seen,
Emblems of death, destructive weapons keen ;
And muskets launching forth their storms of lead,
Tempestuous rattling round each Briton's head.
All that necessity combined with art,
Misfortune, intrepidity, impart,
And fear itself, alike were planted there,
The deeds ensanguined of that day to share.
How many Britons then were boiled, pierced, riven,
Dying in crowds, and ranks on ranks hard driven :
So the ripe corn beneath the reaper's hand
Promiscuous falls and covers all the land.

Still this assault they furiously maintain,
The more they fall, the more they come again.
Like horrid Hydra, fierce heads fall to earth,

Only to be created in another birth ;
Yet this affrighted not the son of Jove ;
The English thus through fire and carnage drove,
After their check more formidable fall,
And bravely stern the numbers which appall.

Fierce Richemont, hope of Orléans in the fight,
Thou rushest onward to the ramparts' height ;
Five hundred burgesses, a chosen band,
Reeling, march forward under thy command ;
The potent wines their souls illuminate,
And with its sap their veins are animate :
As gallant Richemont bellowed out amain,
"Your legs, good folks, your weight can not sustain ;
But I'm with you, 'tis fit we come to blows ;"
He spoke, and rushed 'mid thickest of the foes.
Talbot already had carved out a way
Along the ramparts, urged by fury's sway ;
One direful arm hurled foes to death's drear night,
The other urged his phalanx to the fight ; *

* Variant: *The other urged his phalanx to the fight ;*
The last resisting place his foot obtains.
Unhappy city, what for thee remains ?
In sadness Charles, etc.

“Louvet,” he cried, with strong, stentorian voice,
And Louvet heard him, flattered at his choice.
Thus *Louvet* sounds from all the British band
Though not a soul the cause could understand ;
O stupid mortals, with what ease we teach
Your tongues those things which are beyond your reach.

In sadness Charles within his fort was locked,
Fast by another English cohort blocked ;
To the beleaguered town he may not go,
He suffocates with weariness and woe ;
“What,” he exclaimed, “and must I thus stand by,
Nor succour those, who in my service die ;
With joyous hymns their sire’s return they hailed,
I should have entered, fought, perhaps prevailed,
And saved them from inhuman British bands ;
But here grim Destiny enchains my hands!”
“Not so,” quoth Joan, “ ’tis fitting you be seen,
Come, signalise your blows ; let vengeance keen
These Britons place ’twixt you and Orléans town ;
March on, the city save, and reap renown ;
Though small our band, we thousands boast in you.”
“What,” quoth the monarch, “can you flatter too ?
My worth is small ; to merit, I will try,
France’s esteem and yours, impartially,—

And England's too": he spoke, spurred on for fame,
- Before his person streamed the Oriflamme;
Joan and Dunois both galoped at his side,
Horsemen behind, to list his orders ride;
And 'midst a thousand cries is heard to ring,
Long live Saint Denis, Mont-Joye and the King.

Charles and Dunois and eke the martial fair
Attack the British squadrons in the rear;
As from those mounts which in their breasts confine
The reservoirs of Danube and the Rhine,
The haughty eagle with his pinions spread,
And piercing eyes, and eight sharp talons dread
Poised in mid air, on falcon darts in turn,
Who gorged the neck of the expiring hern. *

* Variant: *Who gorged the neck of the expiring hern.*
The British, thinking that an army passed,
From the alarmed city rush down fast.
And all the burgesses, grown valorous quite,
Seeing them fly, pursue their hurried flight.
Charles, in advance, mid scenes of blows and wrath,
Right to their camp hews out a noble path.
Besieged, besiegers in their turn appear,
Assailed and stricken in the front and rear,
In crowds beside their trench they fall and lie,
A heap of arms and dead and like to die,
Their clustered bodies make a rampart high.

'Twas then that British valour highest rose,
As purest steel upon the anvil glows,

Amid this mêlée dire of strife and blood,
The King to Dunois quoth: "My Bastard good,
Tell me, I pray thee, whither she is gone?"
"Who?" Dunois asked. At once the King went on;
"O whither has she gone — for sure you know!"
"Who then?... Alas, she's vanished, evenso!
Last evening, ere happy destiny
To Bedford's castle led our company;
She was not there when in that place we fared."
"O, we shall find her soon," the Maid declared.
"Heaven," cried the king, "may she be true to me,
O keep her true!" During this history,
Forward he went and combated always.

O wherefore can not I in sounding lays
Of feats heroical prolong the praise?
'T is only Homer hath a right to tell
All these adventures, and on such to dwell,
To lengthen out and feats anew expose
To calculate the several wounds and blows,
To add to Hector's battles still a store
Of mighty deeds, and join to combats more.
That such a course were sure to please is plain.
Nathless to speak of this I'll not refrain,
What danger cruel fair Agnes underwent,
Whilst on to glory's path her lover went.
Along the road where Loire's waters glide,
She talked with Bonifoux, who, at her side,
Always demure, insinuating, sweet,
Told her some tale about the Fiend, discreet,
Not too didactic, but diverting too,

By fire attempered and attuned by blows.
See, Albion's youth all emulous of praise,

The moral hidden in a pleasant view.
Some paces off La Trimouille and his Dame
Proceeded, talking of their constant flame,
And how some day they purposed to reside
Within their castle, with love occupied.
The hand of nature spread beneath their feet,
Along their road, a carpet verdant, neat,
Of very velvet like the mead renowned,
Where swift Atlanta raced along the ground.
Upon this turf, where grasses gently grow,
Agnes approaches, with them she will go ;
Follows the confessor the vagrant fair ;
All four proceed with converse wondrous rare ;
Of love, of combats and of piety,
Of English and the Devil they argufy ;
Nothing their eyes saw longer as they talked,
As each and all they gently, gently walked,
Both horse and man, upon the quaking land,
The feet, at first, then body, head and hand
All were engulfed ; as at a certain ball.
That's given by a scribbling cardinal
Three times a week, with operatic aid
Oft from an opera very vilely played,
More than one hero from our sight is snapped,
And into Hell most suddenly entrapped.
Monrose observed from off the further shore
The beauteous Agnes, and was tempted sore
To render to the object of his view
All the respect which in his spirit grew.
The bridge he crosses ; great is his surprise
No more to see what just then met his eyes.
Colder than marble and as white as chalk,

See heirs of those who fought in Clodion's days ;
Inflamed and fierce, insatiate each of gore,
They flew like winds, that through the vacuum pour,
In contact joined, immovable they're seen,
Like rook amidst old Ocean's empire green,
Foot against foot, the crest opposed to crest,
Hand to hand, eye to eye, and breast to breast,
Onward they rush, oaths breathing that appall,
While rolling o'er each other dead they fall.
O ! wherefore can not I in sounding lays,
Of feats heroical prolong the praise ?
'Tis only Homer hath a right to tell
All these adventures and on such to dwell,

Himself is swallowed as he starts to walk.
Paul Tirconel, who little off had stayed,
Beholds and gallops hotly to his aid ;
But when he comes to those disastrous brinks,
Just as the others Paul Tirconel sinks.
Into a great decavity they fall,
Which leads them to a garden's gate and wall,
Such as not even Louis XIV possessed,
Sire of a king as much despised as blessed.
Straight to a castle did the garden lead,
Which of that garden worthy was indeed.
It was — my heart at the mere word's in pain,
Of *Conculix*, the terrible domain.
O Agnes, Dorothy and Bonifoux !
What will you do, what will become of you ?

To lengthen out and feats anew expose,
To calculate the several wounds and blows,
To add to Hector's battles, still a store
Of mighty deeds, and join to combats more.
That such a course were sure to please is plain ;
'Tis not my way, and I will e'en refrain.

CANTO XVI

*How Saint Peter appeased Saint George and Saint Denis,
promising a noble prize to him who should produce the best
Ode—Death of the lovely Rosamore.*

O Heavenly palace ! open to my lay,
Bright spirits who six pennons wide display !
Ye feathered Gods ! whose tutelary hands
People and kings encircle in Fate's bands ;
Ye, who, expanding wide your wings, conceal
The blaze eternal farthest Heavens reveal,
Deign for a little time apart to stand ;
Let me behold, as war thus wields the brand,
What's done in sanctuary's depth of Heav'n,
And be my curiosity forgiv'n.

This prayer Tritemus breathed : My dazzled eye
Never presumed to pierce the ambient sky,
Nor dared the depths of court supreme to see ;
I should not have so much temerity.

The rough St. George and our apostle kind,
Were both in Heaven's ethereal realm confined :
All they beheld, yet neither could extend
His hand, those earthly combats to befriend ;
They both caballed, to this all folks resort,
And such the practice ever is at court :
Both George and Denis, turn by turn complain
To worthy Peter in the empyrean plain.

This porter famed, whose Vicar is the Pope,
Closes in net, of all our fates, the hope,
His double keys rule life and death below.
To them thus Peter said : "You doubtless know
The dire affront, my friends, I had to bear,
When from one Malchus I removed an ear.
Right well I call to mind my master's word ;
He bade me in my scabbard sheath my sword ;
Deprived was I of lustrous right of arms ;
Another mode, I find, with novel charms,
To heal your breach and settle your alarms.
You, Denis, from your district, forth shall draw
The greatest Saints that ever Gallia saw ;
You, Master George, repair with equal speed,
And call those Saints that sprung from Albion's seed :
Let either troop incontinent compose

An hymn in verse, but not an ode in prose ;
Houdart was wrong : at such a height, one must
One's tongue to language of the gods adjust ;
Let each, I say, Pindaric ode indite,
In which my virtues rare be brought to light ;
My rights, my attributes, supremacy ;
To music set the whole immediately ;
The race of mortals oft takes time enough
To rhyme its verses—e'en the poorest stuff :
We quicker go in these abodes of joy.
Proceed, I say, your talents well employ ;
The better ode the victory shall obtain ;
Thus shall the fortune of the foes be plain."

Thus from the heights of his ethereal throne
To rivals spoke the infallible Barjone ;
Two words, at most, the sense of it supplies,
The language of the Saints is so concise.
Forth in a twinkling both the Saints are gone,
To summon bards before St. Peter's throne ;
Saints who as mortals for their wit were known.

The patron Saint in Paris' walls adored,
Invited to his round and ample board
Saint *Fortunatus*, little known on earth,

Said to have given *Pangé linguas* birth ;
And Saint *Prosper*, of epithets the bard,
Though somewhat Jansenist, as well as hard ;
The name of *Gregory* on his list was placed,
Who with his mitred see of Tourraine graced,
Dear to the soil, where Bonneau saw the light.
Bernard—antithesis was his delight—
He had no rival in his famous time,
With other saints to form the council prime ;
As trusty councillors he summoned these ;
Without advice we rarely learn to please.

George, hearing of St. Denis, all this din,
Disdainful eyed him, with sarcastic grin,
Amidst enclosure saintly ; then espied
The noted preacher *Austin*, Albion's pride,
And thus addressed him, calling him aside.
"Good fellow *Austin*, I am formed for arms,
And not for verse, which has for me no charms ;
Right well I know my trusty blade to wield,
And scatter trunks and heads about the field ;
You versify :—come, set to work and rhyme,
Support our country's fame in lays sublime ;
One Briton on the plain of deadly thrall,
With ease can triumph o'er three sons of Gaul :

Oft have we seen upon the Norman plain,
In Guienne, Picardy and Upper Maine,
These pretty gentlemen with ease laid low ;
If in the fight we stronger arms can shew,
Trust me where hymn and ode or aught's required,
Where rhyme and thinking are the points desired,
In all such things we have as good a might ;
Enter the lists then, Austin ; promptly write ;
Let London rule for ever and a day,
In the two arts to do well and well say :
Denis of rhymers will collect an host
Who in the mass but little genius boast ;
Toil thou alone, old authors thou canst weigh,—
Courage, proceed, sound from thine harp the lay ;
The sacred strain shall Albion's name adorn,
And laugh his dull academy to scorn.”

Austin, to whom the labour was consigned,
Thanked him, as author blest by patron kind :
Himself and Denis in a snug abode,
Squatted themselves, and each composed his ode ;
When all was done, the flaming Seraphim,
The bloated chubby heads of Cherubim,
Near Barjone in two ranks were perched aloft,
Angels beneath nestled in aether soft ;

While all the saints, considering their ranks,
Await to hear upon the judgment banks.

Austin begins the wonders to impart,
Which made obdurate the Egyptian's heart ;
Moses, and the ensuing company,
Equal to him in holy sorcery ;
The waves of Nile, beneficent of yore,
By incantation turned to fluid gore ;
The magic wand, a winding snake becomes,
Again the rod its wonted form resumes ;
Day changed to night ; cities and deserts wild
By swarms of gnats and vermin foul defiled ;
Mange in the bones ; thunder in airy space,
And all the first born of a rebel race,
All butchered by the Angel of the Lord ;
Egypt in mourning and the faithful horde
Its patrons of their silver plate bereaves ;
They earn salvation by becoming thieves :
For forty years they wander to and fro,
These twenty thousand for a calf laid low,
And twenty thousand more to graves consigned,
For having found the other sex too kind :
Then came the Hebrew Ravaillac, Aod,
Murdering his master in the name of God ;

And Samuel, who seized the kitchen knife
With holy hand from altar, and of life
Agag bereft, whom he anatomized
Because this Agag was uncircumcized ;
Of Bethulia was praised the saviour fair,
Pure folly acting with her charms so rare ;
The good Baasha who massacred Nadad,
And impious Ahab dying like the bad,
Because he had not slain Levi Benhadad.
Blood of Athalia's queen by Joad spilled,
And princely Joas by Josabad killed.

Dull was the litany and somewhat long ;
While interspersed these brilliant traits among
Were mighty deeds detailed in sounding lays.
Those acts so cherished in the olden days ;
Videlicet—the Sun dissolved in smoke,
Recoiling seas, the moon in fragments broke,
The globe for ever quaking and on fire,
And God an hundred times awoke in ire :—
Ruins and tombs were seen, and seas of blood,
Yet still beside the silvery current's flood,
Milk flowed beneath the olive's verdant shade,
Like very rams the mountains skipped and played,
The hills like little lambs kept skipping too.

Unto that lord, good Austin gave full due,
Who threatened loud the conqueror of Chaldie,
And left his people still in slavery ;
But always broke the teeth of lions dread,
And trampled on the rampant serpent's head :
Though at his word the flowing hill was stayed,
Leviathans and basilisks obeyed.
Austin was silent ; his Pindaric strain
Called forth amid the bright empyrial train
A doubtful murmur ; whispers were bestowed
Not altogether flattering to the ode.

Denis arose, low bent his eyes serene,
Which straightway reared, displayed his modest mien,
Before his auditors then bending low,
As if surprised at their celestial glow,
Thus seemed he to address the sacred host,
Encourage that one who admires you most.
Thrice with humility he lowly bent
To counsellors and the first president ;
Then chaunted with a tender voice and clear
This hymn expert, which ye anon shall hear.
"O Peter, on whom Jesus deigned to found
His holy church, from age to age renowned,
O Heaven's Porter, Pastor of sheep true !

Master of kings, who bend their knee to you,
Doctor Divine, Priest, Saintly Father just,
Of all our Christian Kings support august,
To them your salutary air extend,
Their rights are just, and you their rights befriend.
At Rome, the Pope ranks chief of sceptered men,
None doubt it, and if his lieutenant then
Bestows on whom he lists this present small,
'Tis in your name, for you dispense them all ;
Alas ! alas ! our men of parliament
Have banished Charles ; and their hands insolent
Have placed an alien on the throne of France,
Taking from son the sire's inheritance :
Porter divine, your benefits oppose
To this audacity, to ten years woes,
On your benignity our sufferings ease,
And of the *Palace Court* restore the keys."

Such was the prelude of St. Denis' strain ;
He paused awhile, then read with studied pain,
Glancing askance in Simon Peter's eyes,
Reluctance feigned within his bosom rise :
Cephas content lets show upon his face,
Of flattered vanity sufficient trace ;
And thus the scattered wits well to release

Of the skilled singer, put him at his ease :
"Continue," said he, "you are sure to please."
With prudence Denis once more struck the lyre :
"Mine adversary may have charmed the choir,
The God of vengeance he hath loudly praised,
Whereas my sounding plaudit shall be raised
To praise the God of mercy : if you will,
To hate is good, to love is better still."
Denis more confident in voice and mind
Then sang in pleasing verse the shepherd kind,
Who when his flock to other pastures roam,
Is glad to follow them, and bear them home ;
The farmer bland, whose kindness dared dispense
Still to the slattern workman recompense,
Who came too late, that diligent for pay,
He might his toil renew with blush of day :
The worthy patron, who with loaves but five
And fishes three, could thousands keep alive ;
He, with more sweetness than austerity,
Forgiving her found in adultery—
That Magdalen ; nor were his feet denied,
But by the fair repentant, bathed and dried.
"Fair Magdalen, the type of fair Sorel."
(This stroke of light allusion answered well.)
The great ethereal hall the trait observed

And thought that Love its pardon had deserved.
The ode of gentle Denis, its worth perceived,
The prize, with no demurring voice received ;
Of England's Saint was foiled the boldness dread,
Austin blushed deep, and forthwith skulking fled :
One and all laughed ; through Páradise they bawled :
E'en so in Paris hooting once appalled
A pedant dull, like Thersites in face,
Informer vile, of hypocritic race,
Whose recompence was hatred and disdain,
As in style vulgar, he dared waft his strain,
His brothers damn, and arts of honour stain.
Peter of Agnuses gave Denis two,
He kissed them rev'rently, and straight to view,
Subscribed by twelve elect was seen decree,
That Albion's host upon that day should flee
'Fore Gallia's bands, to glory's conquest led
By sovereign Charles in person, at their head.

That moment then the Amazon of Bar
Beheld in air, athwart dense cloud afar,
The form and likeness of her donkey gray,
As oft a cloud imbued by sunny ray
Receives impression, and reflects the hue.
"This day," she cried, "is glorious for you ;

All, all is ours ; my ass is in the skies."

Bedford at this fell marvel in surprise
Halted and was invincible no more ;
But read, astounded, in that heavenly lore,
That by St. George he was deserted quite :
The Briton thinking he beheld outright
An host, rushed forthwith from the town alarmed ;
Its citizens with sudden valour armed,
Viewing them urged to flight by terror's spell,
Forth rushing straight, pursue them all pell-mell ;
Charles at a distance amidst carnage strove,
And to their camp a noble passage drove ;
Besieged in turn besiegers now appear,
Assailed and slaughtered in the front and rear,
In crowds they fall, the dykes are choked with slain,
And arms and dead and dying load the plain.

'Twas even there, upon that fateful plain,
Thou cam'st to give thy dauntless valour rein,
Bold Christopher, by surname Arundel,
Thy cold indifference, visage hard and fell,
Tended thy lofty vigour to enhance.

From 'neath that haughty brow, the silent glance
Examined shrewdly how they fight in Gaul ;
From his important look it seemed to all,
He loitered there Time's heavy hours to kill ;

His Rosamore, attached and faithful still,
Like him was cased in steely war's attire,
As she had been some page or faithful squire ;
Gold was her casque, and steel her coat of mail,
Her nodding crest a parrot's gaudy tail,
Its lofty shade obedient to the gale.

For since the day her hand had dared assail,
And severed head from trunk of *Martinguerre*,
Her chief delight had been war's deeds to dare,
Pallas she might have been in all her bloom,
For arms abandoning the inglorious loom ;
Or Bradamant, or even very Joan.

She spoke to her loved wanderer alone,
Deploying sentiments sublimely grand ;
When lo ! some fiend, fell foe of Cupid's band,
For their mishap toward Arundel decreed
That young La Hire and Poton should succeed,
And Richemont of no pitying thrill the slave.
Poton beholding mien so fierce and grave,
To see him babbling, right indignant grew
And at the Englishman his long lance threw ;
Pierced in the flank to earth the Briton rolled,
In copious streams flowed blood alas ! too cold :
He fell, he died ; the shivered lance still seen
Plunged in his corse, and rolling on the green.

At this dread sight, this moment of distress,
No eye saw Rosamore her lover press,
Nor tear away the gold of her blonde hair,
Nor with her cries of sorrow rend the air,
Nor rail infuriate 'gainst high Heaven's decree ;
Not e'en a sigh ; "Vengeance," she cried, "for me ;"
But, at the very moment Poton leant
Forward to grasp his battered blade and bent,
Her naked arm, that arm of power so dread,
Which with one stroke had severed, when in bed,
From bandit's trunk the grim and hoary head,
Now lopped with nimble and with nervous blow
The guilty right hand from the exulting foe.
Those hidden nerves beneath the fingers five
For the last time with motion are alive :
Poton has written nought since then, I trow.
The brave and fair La Hire comes forward now,
To aid his vanquished friend, and aims a blow,
A mortal thrust transpiercing through the heart ;
Falling, the straps of the gold helmet part,
Discovering neck of rose and lilies' hue,
Nor was there aught concealed her front from view,
Her long, long hair streams down upon her breast,
Her big, blue eyes are closed in deathly rest ;
And all confessed to his astonished sight

A lovely woman formed for all delight.
La Hire thus gazing, breathes full many a sigh,
And weeping wafts this lamentable cry :
"Just Heaven, as vile assassin I appear,
A black hussar and not a cavalier ;
My heart and sword foul infamy display,
Is it permitted thus a dame to slay ?"
But Richemont, always scoffing, always rough,
Cries to him : "This remorse is pretty stuff ;
She was an English dame, the harm is small,
With, unlike Joan, no maidenhead at all !"
While thus indulging in such speech profane,
From arrow's barbed point he felt the pain,
Wounded he turned, still more provoked and dread,
His thrusts, both right and left, increased the dead :
Foes rushing torrent-like surround his form ;
Himself, La Hire, and nobles brave the storm,
With soldiers, citizens, all strive their best,
They kill, they fall, pursue, retire, hard pressed,
Of bleeding trunks a mountain was displayed,
And Britons, of their dying, ramparts made.

'Mid all this sanguinary, dreadful fray,
To Dunois thus the King was heard to say :
"Prithee, dear Bastard, where may she be gone ?"

“Who?” cried Dunois. — The worthy King went on,
“Do you not know what time she last was seen?”
—“Who then?”—“Alas, I think it must have been
Last night ere lucky fortune brought us all
Before the doors of Bedford’s castle wall.”
“Ne’er fear,” quoth Joan, “restored she soon shall be.”
“Heaven grant,” quoth Charles, “that she rest true to me,
For me preserve her.” With such discourse fair,
He still advances, fighting everywhere.
Soon night, embracing our wide hemisphere,
Spread her broad mantle through the murky air,
And terminated with the close of day
· The novel ardour Charles would fain display.

Whilst thus escaping from the combat dread
The anxious monarch, sudden heard it said,
Three tender specimens of womanhood
Were seen that morning in a neighbouring wood ;
Amidst the rest, a form divinely fair,
Two big blue eyes, and dainty, infant air ;
The smile most tender, skin like satin soft,
Whom sermonized a Benedictine oft.
Brilliant esquires, equipped in proud array,
In steel adorned, and gold and ribbands gay,
Tended the fair horse-women on her way,

Till soon the errant troop perceived in view
A noble edifice that no one knew
Till this adventure, in that spot to be :
No pile more curious the eye could see.

The King amazed at such a wondrous thing,
To Bonneau cries : "Who loves, follows his King !
To-morrow with the dawn I will repair
To view the constant object of my care,
Agnes regain, or cast my life away."
Small time within the arms of sleep he lay,
And when Phosphor, with face ensanguined,
The roses of Aurora well had led,
While yet in Heaven, unharnessed were the steeds
That wheel bright Phoebus on to blazing deeds,
The monarch, Dunois, Joan and eke Bonneau,
Their saddles vaulted with a joyous glow,
Hieing this sumptuous palace to explore.
As Charles declared : "My fair, let's see before ;
There's time enough to join the British host,
Her to be with, is now what presses most."

CANTO XVII

How Charles VII, Agnes, Joan, Dunois, La Trimouille, all became fools—and how they recovered their senses by the exorcisms of the most reverend Father Bonifoux, the confessor of the King.

Oh, what enchanters does this world display !
(Nothing of fair enchantresses I say.)
That page is turned, where weakness writ the page,
Dear folly's spring-time, error's lovely age ;
Yet still deceivers come at every hour,
Real sorcerers, seducers of much power,
Bright glory beaming and in purple dight,
Escorting you at first to Heaven's height,
Then plunging you within the black wave's brink,
Where bitterness and death is all you drink.
Then, whatsoe'er your rank, I much entreat
Your care when necromancers such you meet,
And if you seek some high enchantments' stir,
Neglect the mightiest of kings for—Her.

Hermaphrodix expressly chose to build
This happy castle which fair Agnes held,
O'er all the fair of France to prove his rights,
O'er donkeys also, saints and simple knights,
Whose deeds by Heaven inspired, whose modesty
Had dared resist his magic potency.
Who ever entered this abode so fell
Could not, incontinent his best friend tell ;
His senses, wit and memory all fled.
Lethean waters whereof quaff the dead,
Or scurvy wines which living men infect,
Have far less an extravagant effect.

Beneath vast columns of a portico,
Which modern and antique in medley show,
A brilliant phantom was seen to parade,
Light footed ; in his eyes fire-flashes played ;
Quick-gestured, nervous-stepping, still erect
He held his head ; in tinsel he was decked ;
Unsteady motion ever moved his frame,
Imagination was the phantom's name ;
Not that same goddess, ever fair and glad,
Who over Rome and Greece dominion had,
Who spread the colours of her high estate
On works of many authors and so great,

Who diamonds and immortal flowers would rain
On the great painter of Achilles' strain ;
On Dido erst by Virgil celebrate,
Who Ovid's skill was wont to animate ;
But she whom reason ever has abjured,
Flighty and impudent and most absurd,
Who leads so many authors at her side,
Who serves as inspiration and as guide
To Desmarests, Le Moine or Scudéris.
She sheds abundant of her charity.
On our new operas and romantic stuff ;
(I think her empire's lasted long enough
Over the stage, the pulpit and the bar !)
A certain *Bombast* followed not afar,
A most loquacious monster, whose arms hold
Him, the *Seraphic Doctor* called of old,
Deep, subtile, versed in energy's bold page,
Imagination's commentating sage,
Creator of confusion's dire epoch
Of late producing *Marie à la Coque* ;
Around him bad *bons mots* were seen to flit,
And dull conundrums, which are folly's wit ;
Dreams, blunders, prejudices and lies immense,
And all the other things which outrage sense ;
As near the mouldering walls of some old house,

Are heard the screech-owl and the flitter-mouse.
Howe'er that be, this damnable resort
Was fabricate with art of such a sort,
That all who entered, were anon bereft
Of any scrap of reason they had left.

Hardly had Agnes with her fair escort
Come to the precincts of the palace court,
Than Bonifoux, that confessor of fame
Became the object of her faithful flame ;
From France's king she could not him design.
"Mine hero," cried she, "only hope of mine !
O, by just Heaven to my arms restored
Have the proud Britons fallen 'neath your sword ?
Some wound perchance you haply have received ;
Be now by me from armour's weight relieved."
With tender care, and with affection true,
Anon she sought to unfrock Bonifoux,
With eyes on fire, bent neck, her willing charnis,
Gladly she had abandoned to his arms ;
A kiss she seeks to take and then repay.
O charming Agnes, what was thy dismay !
A chin fresh-shaved was doubtless what she sought,
A frowsy, unkempt beard was what she caught.
Long and uncombed ; right well it tickled her.

The confessor departed in a stir,
The entreating fair he did not recognize ;
Whilst Agnes, grieved that he should thus despise,
Runs after him, with tears in her fair eyes.

As each amid the vast enclosure sped,
One signing cross, while tears the other shed,
Lugubrious cries excite them to alarm.
A youthful creature, touching, full of charm
Crouched on the ground, in terror dire embraced
Knees of a cavalier in armour laced,
Who soon had dealt her out chastisement sore.
In such a savage case, one knew no more
La Trimouille, lover unparalleled,
Who, at all other times, his life had held
Cheap price for Dorothy, whom he mistook
For proud Tyrconel, though not any look
Of that proud Briton had she : him she sought,
Her valiant hero, then with fury fraught,
Dear object of a love that could not die :
Him she addressed, not knowing he was nigh ;
And thus she cried : "Have you seen anywhere,
That knight who is my master and my Dear ?
Who hither came that he might rest with me,
My Trimouille, alas, where can he be ?

Where is he now? Ah, wherefore doth he fly?"
The knight of Poitou heard this touching cry,
But did not know his faithful love was there ;
A Briton proud and fierce he seemed to hear,
Who, rushing on him, sought that life to end
Which sword in hand he started to defend,
Towards Dorothy he moves, with paces slow :
"Another face," he says, "I'll make you show,
Briton disdainful, arrogant, severe,
Rough islander, drunk ever with strong beer,
Well it becomes you in such way to prate,
And thus revile a man of my estate!
I, Poitevin, with grand-sires of renown,
Whose doughty deeds have often hurried down
To the dark places British not a few,
Brave, fierce and great, more generous than you.
What! does your hand refuse the sword to wield,
To what vile terrors does your bosom yield?
Coward in deed! Loquacious at your ease!
You English goat! You British Thersites!
Fit in your Parliament to brawl at home ;
Quick, draw our broad-swords and to action come.
Unsheath then quick, or with my hand I go
To mark your face, the ugliest face I know,
And with a whip upon your large behind,

Apply as many scores as suits my mind."

At this discourse, in fearful wrath expressed,
Pale, fainting and with fear of death distressed :

"I am no Briton," Dorothy cried out ;

"O, far from that, how does it come about,
That you should so mistreat me in this place :
Why am I fall'n in such a direful case ?
To search for Poitou's knight was my intent,
Alas ! it is a girl that you torment,
With tearful kisses suppliant at your knees."

She spoke, but no whit listening was he,
And La Trimouille, whose madness knew no check,
Already caught the lady by her neck.

The confessor who in his nimble speed,
Thus sought from Agnes Sorel to be freed,
Tripped as he ran and fell between the pair ;

The squire of Poitou strove to grasp his hair,
But finding none, rolled with him on the ground,
The arms of Agnes straight his form surround,
Who on him falling uttered shrieks of fear,
And sobs that stayed the course of sorrow's tear,
While Dorothy beneath them struggling lay,
In sad disorder and in torn array.

Just in the middle of this novel fight,

Led by Bonneau, King Charles appeared in sight,
With Dunois bold and Joan the maid of Fate,
Who just had past this castle's dreadful gate,
With fond intent his faithful fair to view ;
Oh ! mighty power, oh, wonder, strange and new ;
On ground from steeds they'd hardly set their feet,
That portico had barely time to greet,
When each incontinent was left of brain.
Of doctors furred in Paris, thus the train
With arguments replete 'neath bonnet square,
Gravely to antique Sorbonne all repair ;
Resort of strife, that theologic cell,
Where disputation and confusion dwell,
And reason hath no longer any right.
One after t'other comes each reverend wight,
Steady in mind and air to casual sight ;
Each, when at home, a very sage is seen,
Who well might pass for gentle and serene,
Not quarrelsome and not extravagant,
Nay, even some looked quite intelligent ;
Yet on their benches fools to all intent.

Charles with joy drunken and with soft desire,
His eyes all wet, yet glistening with fire,
Feeling impetuous his heart inflamed,

In tones of languor and of love exclaimed :
"My mistress chaste—my Agnes ever dear,
My paradise, of every joy the sphere,
How often have I lost thy form adored !
To my desires thou art at length restored.
Tell me of love, now thee I see and hold ;
O, how thy face is charming to behold ;
But thou no longer hast that slender waist,
That erst with my ten fingers I enlaced.
What thighs ! what plumpness ! and oh, what a paunch !
This is the fruit of our embraces staunch :
My teeming Agnes bears the fruit of joy,
And soon will bless me with a bouncing boy.
O let me graft again, so great my glee,
This novel fruit upon the mother tree.
Love so ordains it, for the feat I'm wild,
To rush to meet this dear, expected child."

To whom breathed thus the monarch's glowing strain ?
To whom addressed he this pathetic vein ?
Whom in his amorous arms did thus he hold ?
'Twas Bonneau, puffy, sweating, dry and old—
'Twas Bonneau : man to earthly scenes allied
Soul ne'er possessed so deadly stupefied ;
Charles, by an ardent passion hotly pressed,

With nervous arm his courtier huge caressed,
Down threw him, and our pond'rous Bonneau fell
Upon the troop already there *pell-mell*,
Which his great bulk by no means relishes.
O Heavens ! what clamour, and what piercing cries !
The confessor with germ of sense now graced,
His paunch so corpulent precisely placed,
Agnes above and Dorothy below—
He rose, then ran as fast as he could go.
While scarcely breathing, worthy Bonneau fled,
Seized by a fit La Trimouille was led
To think those arms sweet Dorothy embraced,
And Bonneau's steps, thus bawling out, he chased ;
“My heart, my life, O torturer restore ;
Stop, hear my speech”—nor words he uttered more,
But with huge sabre dealt on back rude stroke.
Bonneau, then galled by breast-plate's ponderous yoke,
Gave out a clatter which resembled much
That of the steel, when at the hammer's touch
Upon the potent anvil it resounds :
Fear drove his hurried course in heavy bounds.
Joan thus beholding Bonneau at full trot,
And the dire strokes he from assailant got,
Joan, in her helm and armour bright arrayed,
Followed Trimouille and with good interest paid

All that on kingly confidant was poured.
Dunois, of noble knights the puissant lord,
Will not endure that one should strive to stop.
La Trimouille's days ; he is his dearest prop ;
For him it is his destiny to fight ;—
That he knew well—the maid was to his sight
An Englishman : he falls on her amain,
He thrashes her, as he thrashes again
The knight of Poitou, pricking in his turn
Friend Bonneau, who to fly did greatly yearn.

The good king Charles, in this confusion dire,
In worthy Bonneau saw his soul's desire,
His Agnes—what condition for a king,
The prince of lovers, ever languishing !
Her to defend he would an army face,
And all his men of war who Bonneau chase,
Blood-thirsty ravishers to him appeared.
His lifted sword against Dunois he reared—
The handsome Bastard turns and renders back
Full on his visor a tremendous whack ;
Ah, had he known it was the King of France,
How he had looked upon himself askance !
With sheer remorse and shame his life had failed.
His sword alike the warrior Joan assailed,

Whose potent blade was not slow to requite ;
The Bastard, quite incapable of fright,
Attacks at once his king and mistress too ;
About their heads his good sword flashed and flew,
A thousand times its strokes tempestuous blew.
Stop, gallant Dunois, stop, O beauteous Joan !
What tears, what fell regrets your breast will own,
When whom your arms assailed either knows,
Whom you had struck, with whom you came to blows.

The knight of Poitou in this dread alarm
Let fall from time to time his doughty arm,
Assaulting all the beauties of the Maid ;
Friend Bonneau followed not this soldier's trade,
His thick head, than the rest, less trouble felt,
All he received, but never one blow dealt ;
As running, Bonifoux, impelled by dread,
Maintained the van and thus the cohort led,
The hurricane that with their rage prevailed,
Sent all pell-mell, assailants and assailed.
Beating and beaten, each in skirmish vile
Crying and bawling, traversed the vast pile ;
Agnes in tears, and Dorothy, fear-chilled,
Screamed out for help : "My throat is cut, I'm killed."
While the confessor, with a contrite heart

In the procession took the leading part.
Now, at a certain window, he espied
This mansion's master in his evil pride,
Hermaphrodix, whose glance was gay, to see
Gaul's sons tormented with barbarity ;
He held his sides, he laughed and laughed again ;
Bonifoux saw then that this fell domain
Was without doubt some foul device of Hell,
A little reason he retained as well ;
His tonsure broad, his ample cowl and great,
Had served indeed for armour to his pate.
He knew Bonneau possessed a slender store
(A frugal custom used in days of yore,
Dear to our fathers, ne'er to be in fault)
Cloves, nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon and salt ;
For Bonifoux, he had his missal there.
Hardly he chanced to see a fountain clear,
Whither he sped, with salt and mass-book fraught,
Resolved the demon should this time be caught ;
Anon he 'gan mysterious rite so rare,
To exorcize, and imps of sin to scare ;
He muttered low : *Sanctam catholicam,*
Papam Romam, aquam benedictam.
In Bonneau's cup the holy water placed,
Thus armed by Heaven he onwards cunning paced,

And ere the fiend guessed what was to be done,
Sprinkled of Alix, the Hobgoblin son.
Less fatal far the Stygian current rolled
To guilty souls in Pagan days of old.
Straight his tanned hide with sparkles was o'erspread,
A funny vapour sailed around his head,
Covered the palace and its master too,
Hiding the combatants in night's dark hue :
While one after the other fast they run,
Just at that time the palace is undone ;
With combats ceased mistakes and errors too,
They saw aright, their friends each other knew,
And every brain resumed its wonted place ;
Thus to each hero a short second's space,
Restored the little sense one moment lost.
Folly, alas ! or wisdom, to our cost,
Has little count in our poor human-kind.
It was a mighty pleasure then, to find
These Paladins who to the black monk fall,
Who bless him well, sing litanies, and all,
For all their follies seek his pardoning.
O La Trimouille ! And you, oh amorous King !
Your raptures then, oh, who can well declare !
Where nought was heard but such like cries : "My Fair !
My all, my King ! Mine angel true and rare !

'T is you, 't is thou ! sweet moments, hours of bliss !"
And then embraces, then the tender kiss ;
Questions by hundreds, and in haste replies ;
Faulty their tongues to utter thoughts that rise ;
The monk aloof and with paternal glance
Muttered his prayers and eyed them all askance :
The mighty Bastard and his lady blest,
In modest terms their tenderness express'd ;
And the companion of their loves so rare
Raising the head as well as voice in air,
Voiced a discordant octave, loud and new,
A strain so bold no goat-herd ever blew.
At this octave, at this most heavenly bray,
All things were moved, and Nature 'gan to sway ;
Quite horror-struck, as Joan beheld amazed
The magic bastions of this palace razed,
An hundred towers of steel and gates of brass ;
As erst to Moses' horde it came to pass,
When word was given for loud trump to blow,
Down, instant, fell the walls of Jericho,
Reduced to powder, to the prone earth bowed :—
Such practices no longer are allowed.

The palace then, with brilliant gold enchased,
Sublime in structure and by sin debased,

Became an ample, holy monastery.
The hall was turned into an oratory;
The boudoir, where this mighty lord of crimes,
Wallowed in vice, or slept in former times,
Transformed was to a sanctuary straight.
The potent order was of ruling fate,
The Hall of Banqueting unchanged should be,
Thenceforth entitled, *The Refectory*,
Where all was blest before they drank and ate.
Joan, with her heart by all the Saints elate,
With thoughts of sacred Rheims and Orléans' walls,
Cries to Dunois: "Propitious fortune calls,
In love as well as in our great designs
Let's hope always; be sure the fiend resigns,
He's done his worst, and now can do no more."
Yet speaking thus, Joan was mistaken sore.

VARIANT OF CANTO XVII¹

CORISANDRE

My reader by experience is acquaint
That the fair god, whom as a child they paint,
(Though childish games are hardly all his sport)
Hath quivers two, of very different sort.
The one holds arrows, whose entrancing sting
Is felt with little risk or suffering ;
These grow with time, and penetrate the heart,
Leaving the lively wounds they there impart.
Like raging fire, his other arrows fly,
Swift from the bow and burning instantly,
On senses five destruction fell they wreak,
With lively red illuminate the cheek ;
With a new blood, men feel their bodies fired,
And with new being, hold themselves inspired.
Nothing they understand, their eyes are bright,
Gesture and action follow their mad flight.
Waters which boil tumultuous on the fire,
Which, o'er the copper's brink, rise and retire,

¹ This Canto, being completely different in the other editions is translated here in its entirety as a variant. It was the fourteenth Canto in the editions in eighteen Cantos and the nineteenth in those of twenty-four.

Which run away and leap and fall and waltz,
Are but an image, incomplete and false,
Of love's fierce fire, when once it agitates :
You know it, brethren mine, and all its states !
But this capricious god, our light love's king,
Contrived anon a far more pleasant thing :
Betwixt Cutendre and Blois, he caused to dwell
A beauteous maid, whose aspect amiable
Had left the charms of Agnes far behind,
If, with her beauty, her heart had been kind.
(A kind heart's worth much beauty in a dame !)
Foolish and young, Corisandre was her name.
Love's will it was, each king or cavalier,
Young bachelor or magistrate severe,
Should seek, grown foolish, being overfond
With this fair idiot a closer bond ;
Servants, the people and the viler herd
Alone exempt were from this law absurd ;
Gentle or kingly race one had to own
Thus to grow mad. Nor was it that alone :
The healing art, as much hemp as you will,
Brought little help and succour 'gainst this ill ;
And worse and worse the brain would daily grow,
Till the fair fool would some complaisance show,
And such a time in destiny was writ
That, at the last, she might attain to wit.

On Loire's banks nurtured, lovers, more than one,
For Corisandre's sight, were all undone ;
One, losing memory and sense, for food
Just as a stag, would pasture in the wood ;
And one would think his buttocks were of glass,
And being jostled by the folk who pass,
Would weep because his back-side had been broke.
Goyon is sure he is of female folk,
Wears petticoats and dies of his despairs,

Because, to truss them up no lover cares :
A saddle *Valori* takes, by no means light ;
He thinks himself an ass — is doubtless right —
Asks for his load, and ceases not to bray.
Sablé, transformed into a saucépot's way,
On three feet walks ; upon the ground, one hand,
And one bow-legged. Alas, in this our land,
Amongst the madmen we might well have been,
Though the fair Corisandre we ne'er had seen.
Who is the sapient wit, who has not once,
Through his desires, been proved a very dunce ?
Who has not had a check ? In prose or verse,
All men are madmen, if they are not worse.

Now Corisandre a grandmother possessed,
Though stiff, a worthy dame by all confessed,
Whose pride, though she concealed it in the shade,
Was to behold the fools her daughter made.
But scruples 'gan her mind at last to urge,
Sorry she was for such a dismal scourge.
Her daughter then so fatal to the mind,
Within an hidden chamber she confined.
Before the castle she took care to place
Custodians two, with a forbidding face,
Ready the house's entrance to maintain
Against all comers, who would risk their brain.
The foolish Fair, to such seclusion brought,
Sang, sewed, embroidered, very little thought,
Regret or care, not e'en the least desire
Moved her to heal her lovers' maddened fire,
Though had the beauty had this tenderness,
All it had cost her, would be to say Yes.

The haughty Chandos, in high anger still
That his proud combatant had 'scaped his skill,
Straight to his Britons in his wrath returns ;

E'en as the hound, whose savage jaw which yearns
Has snapped in vain at the escaping hare,
Turns, while his yelps of anger rend the air,
Then to his master with slow steps will go,
Head hanging down, and long tail drooping low.
Well his unworthy animal he cursed
Who, in soft duel, brought him off the worst.
His general withal, hastes to supply
A youthful colonel, happening to be by ;
Bold Irishman, by name Paul Tirconel,
Whose chest was broad, who bore himself right well,
As stout of arm as limb, with iron spine,
Whose haughty brow was sealed with the consign
Of one who never such affronts would face,
As now made Chandos redden in disgrace.

This martial pair, with gallant throng behind,
The gates of Corisandre's house now find ;
They seek to enter, when the porters cry :
"We bid you halt ; bethink you ere you try
To enter here and Corisandre behold,
If you would wish what wits you have to hold."
Proud Chandos this a further insult deems,
Onward he rushes, while his fury teems ;
With one straight blow, he sends twelve yards away
One porter, with his arm put out of play ;
Aching and bruised he lies upon the sand.
Paul Tirconel, with no less ruthless hand,
Spurs on his fiery steed and whips him twice,
Presses his knees, lets rein and in a trice
The courser like a lightning flash has sped,
And passes o'er the other porter's head ;
Lifting his front, a moment still he gazed,
A moment rests astonished and amazed,
Then turning round receives a doughty blow,
Which, like his erstwhile colleague, lays him low.

So in the province, some gay officer,
A dandy, natty, fond of sport and stir,
Runs to the play amain, the porter beats
And, without paying, from his ravished seats
He hisses everything he contemplates.

The English suite within the courtyard swarm ;
The ancient Dame descends in high alarm,
While Corisandre, affrighted at the noise,
Her kirtle dons and from her room deploys.
Chandos addresses her a salute short,
True Englishman ! much speech was not his forte ;
But when he saw a face so innocent,
That lily-skin, those charms so succulent,
Those budding breasts and arms of ivory,
Which nature's hands had rounded artfully,
A happy chance he vowed was his to seize ;
When Corisandre, with mien not quite at ease,
Casts him a glance which little seemed to say.
For Paul Tirconel, in his courteous way,
Saluted both the daughter and the dame,
And ogled in his turn and felt love's flame.
What happened then ? Alas, fell madness came.

Chandos, affected by that malady,
As horse-dealer, native of Normandy,
The youthful fair declares to be a horse,
Who must be saddled, mounted in due course,
He whips her fleshy saddle with a crack,
And in a trice is mounted on her back.
The fair cries out, and under Chandos falls,
Paul Triconel, whom different mania calls,
A tavern-keeper holds himself to be,
And takes the fair, who's crouched upon her knee,
For a fat tun of wine, which he must bore,
Good wine and lees from th'orifice to draw.

Still straddling her, Chandos cries out: "Have done,
God dam! You're mad, I think the evil one
Has crossed your wits; you cannot even tell
From tun of wine, my white mare Isabel!..."

"It is my tun, my tap's occasion."

"It is my horse... "My brother, 't is my tun..."

Both were exactly certain they were right,

And for their mad opinion fain to fight,

With just such fire, as monks in angry vein,

Devotion of their scapular maintain,

Or d'Olivet upholds his Cicero.

Swift contradictions rattle to and fro,

And certain words, which, thank my modesty,

I spare my readers' ears; vocabulary

Which, loathed by proper pride, our Britons famed,

Who vaunt their sabres, look on unashamed.

As winds, which gather force, though erstwhile weak,

Are roused and growl and fragile vessels break,

Which toss too much the waters to withstand,

Horror is shed by them o'er all the land —

So our two Englishmen at first were viewed

In laughter's semblance and a joking mood;

Then vexed, delirious fancies on them steal,

They both rush on, determined death to deal.

Both are on guard, in a like posture shown,

With outstretched arms and bodies forward thrown,

In quart, in tierce, their tough skins they attack.

But soon all rule and measure 'gin to lack,

As hotter still, and fiercer, more incensed

With slashing blows of the keen steel they fenced.

Less fierce in Etna's forge the one-eyed crew,

Out of the anvil, fiery sparks pursue,

Beneath less heavy hammers, who prepare

For thunder's master his big cannon there.

On every side blood casts a lavish stain,

From neck and arm and from the riven brain,
But not one cry succeeded to the wound ;
The worthy dame would cure them *sans* a sound,
To strip them of their armour she desired,
A *Pater* said, a confessor required :
Her daughter all the time, with languid view,
Bridled and sought her coiffure to renew.
Our British pair, exhausted, drenched in gore,
Were lying both full length upon the floor,
When who should come but the great King of France
With all his gallant knights, who bore the lance,
And those bright fair, within his court, who threw
Worthy of Mars and of the God of Love.
Beholding these, the beauteous Fool draws nigh,
And humbly drops a clumsy courtesy,
Bids them good day with utter nonchalance,
And looks at all things with indifference.
Who e'er had thought that nature would admit
Poison so much in eyes so lacking wit.
The beauty even hardly deigns to glance
At the distracted, handsome heads of France.
Heaven sheds its benign graces every day,
Which mortals take in very different way ;
All things are fashioned to the time and place,
And very diverse are the effects of grace.
The self-same sap when nourished in the earth,
Of divers fruits the essences of birth,
Produces pinks, the thistle and the rose ;
And d'Argens sighs when d'Arget laughter knows.
Maupertuis of folly's as prolific
As Newton of his theories scientific.
A certain king to use his soldiers knows
As often for his loves as 'gainst his foes.
All's variable ; and in a different strain
Function the British and the Gallic brain :
Each one the customs of his country fits ;

With Englishmen, of hard and sombre wits,
Madness is atrabilious, black as night ;
But with the French, it lively is and light.

Our folk the hands of one and other seize,
Dance in a ring, sing choruses that please.
The fat Bonneau exertions makes immense,
Though just as scant of breath as of cadence ;
While Father Bonifoux, psalter in hand,
Dances with slower steps with the mad band ;
Him doth the page, above the rest, beguile,
Though by his pious language and his smile,
His accent, gestures and his eyes so kind,
It seemed the Father had a rag of mind.

That novel ill which fascinates the view
Of this most royal and fantastic crew,
Leads them the castle's great court-yard to deem
A garden, wherein flows a pleasant stream.
They wish to bathe, their clothes and corslets pass,
And nakedly disport them on the grass,
Swim in the void, and lift aloft the chin,
Thinking clear water covers them within.
The monk, the while he swam, 't is meet to note,
From the enchanting page was ne'er remote.

At such a mass of noddles without brain,
Such nudity, our modest fair with pain,
The Maid and Agnes and fair Dorothy
Discreetly turned their head and shut the eye,
Then looked again, then after once again
Eyes, heart and hand to the celestial plain.
"Have I then come," cried Joan, "to such a pass ?
I have St. Denis for me and mine ass ;
And many an impious Briton I have braved,
Avenged my prince, and many a convent saved ;

T'wards Orléans' walls my stressful way I've ta'en;
And Destiny must make my labour vain —
Our heroes mad?" Agnes and Dorothy
Contained themselves with certain difficulty;
Sometimes they laughed, sometimes were passing sad
To see great kings and noble heroes mad.
But what to do? Where fly? Oh, whither get?
Cutendre's castle they might well regret;
Had not a servant, of her secret lore,
Taught them the art wits wandering to restore.
"Good sense once lost," she said, "t is Fate's decree,
To brains whence it has flown, restored can be,
Only when Corisandre the fair will deign
In snares of love to let herself be ta'en."

This good advice was not without avail,
The muleteer to heed it did not fail:
Doubtless you know that lecher of remark
Was always amorous of Joan of Arc,
And jealous of the ass, discreet of walk,
That Amazon he never ceased to stalk.
When thus he heard, in confidence arrayed,
He starts forthwith his King and France to aid.
Just in a corner chanced the fair to lie,
Whom from afar he had been pleased to spy;
T'wards her he runs, well armed with fire and rage.
They thought him mad, who was the only sage.
O muleteer! on thee what treasures rare
Kind nature had bestowed with partial care,
Thy lowly fortune compensating well.
With one swift bound he subjugates the belle.
He lays her low and with a vigorous thrust,
A very ram he plays the game of lust,
He forces, breaks the four-fold barricade;
Then quickening the action of his blade
In all its length, he lodges for reward,
Within its sheath his most victorious sword.

At such a brisk assault the youthful fair,
For self-defence had scanty time to spare ;
But with clenched fists, with all her body prone,
Biting her lips, her straight limbs backward thrown,
Nothing by her was understood or known :
She only waited and invoked her saint,
Until her adversary's loins grew faint.

To her, in fine, the pleasing moment came
To learn and know ; and scarce was lit that flame
Of pleasure, whereof previous ignorance
In her young soul had dulled intelligence,
Than the enchanting spell prevails no more,
And every brain is almost as before ;
Almost I say, for there was slight mistake.
King Charles, forsooth, the sturdy sense must take
Of old Bonneau, who, for his part received
Wits of the monk ; and thus were all deceived.
Little advantage came of this exchange ;
The human reason, God's great gift, 't is strange,
Is a small thing, but grudgingly bestowed,
And every mortal's content with his load.
So change had with the lovers no effect ;
Each one preserved for his fair dame elect
His former taste and sweet significance :
And what has love to do with common sense ?
For Corisandre, new knowledge she procured
Of good and ill ; a confidence assured
Of art and taste, an excellent reward
For all her previous innocence ignored ;
All this the presents of a muleteer !
Thus Adam's silly partner, so we hear,
In garden lived and pleasure came not near,
Until the Devil hove within her sight,
And made her charming, subtile, witty, light,
As are the women whom to day we meet,
Who have no need the Devil to entreat.

CANTO XVIII

Disgrace of Charles and his Golden Company.

I know not in this world's historic page
Nor hero, man of wealth, or even sage,
Prophet or Christian, ranking faith his forte,
Who has not of some rascal been the sport,
Of evil sprites, or of the jealous sort.

High Providence at every time would press
The good King Charles with manifold distress ;
Sadly from cradle was he reared in truth,
Pursued by the Burgundian from his youth ;
Him of his rights his father had deprived,
And Paris parliament, where Gonesse thrived,
Tutor of kings, adjourned their pupil there,
And bound on English brow Gaul's lilies rare.
Of mass and weal deprived, he'd errant stray,
And scarcely ever would prolong his stay,
His mother, uncle, mistress, state and church
In turn betrayed and left him in the lurch.

An English page partakes his Agnes' smiles ;
Hell sends Hermaphrodix with fateful wiles,
Dire magic spells to turn his store of brains :
On every side he shuns misfortune's banes,
Yet suffers all, to Heaven's decree resigned ;
Thus Fate forgives his sins, humanely kind.

Our lover's cavalcade, as proud as gay,
Far from the fatal castle took its way,
Where Bcelzebub, the cause of all their woe,
Deranged the knights, fair Agnes and Bonneau.
Along the gloomy forest they repair,
Which still the name of Orléans doth bear,
While Tithon's spouse new-decked in Orient light,
Shed purple radiance through the shades of night.
Soon from afar are seen some archers there,
In short-cut gerkins and in bonnets square,
On corselet half way down, the eye might see,
Quartered with powdered lilies, leopards three :
The monarch halted and with care surveyed
A troop, that squatting near the forest laid ;
Some paces onward moved Dunois and Joan :
Sweet Agnes, with her fair arms outward thrown,
Charles thus bespoke : "Let's go, let's fly, my sire."
Joan onward sped, still nearer to enquire,

And saw a wretched troop in couples bound,
With fronts abashed and eyes enchained to ground.
"Alas! a band of gallant knights," cried she,
"Captives, our duty I conceive to be,
From bondage straight to free this faithful train :
Come, Bastard, come and let's anon make plain,
What Dunois is, and what the virgin maid !"
With lance in rest—these words were quick obeyed,
They charge the troop which guard these heroes true ;
Joan's aspect fierce no sooner struck their view,
With the brave Dunois, and still more the ass,
Than hurriedly these scurvy warriors pass,
And scud like hunted hares across the plain.
Thus the glad maiden hails the captive train ;
"Brave cavaliers, whom the proud English chain,
First thank your king, who saves you from this thrall,
His hand salute, then follow one and all,
And on these peevish English, vengeance meet
Ye shall obtain ;" at such a promised treat,
Their eyes bent low, a sullen air proclaimed ;
Impartial readers, would you have them named,
Would ye enquire what was this noble crew,
By Joan impelled these valiant deeds to do ?
These knights were miscreants from Paris strayed,
Who had reaped their deserts, if there they'd stayed,

And gone to plough the back of Amphitrite,
Their trapping's well betrayed them to the sight.
Good Charles the pitying sigh could not control :
"Alas!" said he, "these objects in my soul
Have deep implanted the keen shaft of pain ;
What ! shall the Britons in my empire reign?
'Tis their decrees my subjects now obey,
For them alone the multitude must pray ;
And shall my subjects then at their intent
From Paris to the galleys e'en be sent?"
Charles, who compassion's thrill could not withstand
Moved courteous to the leader of the band,
Who was the foremost in the cavalcade ;
No scoundrel could more plainly show his trade ;
His long chin shaded by a beard uncouth,
His shifting eyes more lying than his mouth,
The red and twisted tufts upon his brow,
Of fraudulent imposture make avow ;
On his broad front, daring and cunning lies,
Of those who laws ignore, remorse despise ;
Foamed his wide mouth, pestiferous his breath,
And with perpetual rancour gnashed his teeth.

The sycophant beholding thus his prince,
Seemed humbly his devotion to evince,

Bent low his eyes, then softened and composed
That visage, which his haggard crimes disclosed ;
Just so, the mastiff that with haggard gaze,
Its thirst of blood with sudden growl betrays,
His master views and fawns about him gay,
And licks his hand, discoursing in his way ;
And for a crust a very sheep will grow.
Or as a fiend escaped from gulfs below,
His grisly beard, and his foul tail conceals,
Amongst us comes, and tone and visage steals
Of some young hermit ; tonsured head he shows
Better to tempt Sister Discreet or Rose.

The King of France, by arts like these deceived,
This grisly ruffian pitied and relieved,
And as his gentle converse fear allayed ;—
“Tell me,” quoth Charles, “poor devil, what’s thy trade,
Thy name and origin, and for what deed
The Châtelet has indulgently decreed
That henceforth thou shouldst row on Provence main ?”
Whereto the culprit thus made known his pain :
“O bounteous monarch, Frélon is my name,
And from the neighbourhood of Nantes I came.
Jesus I love with pure and true desire,
And in a cloister I was sometime friar,

Their morals as of old my mind retains,
To save young children I took wondrous pains ;
Passed were my days in virtue's pure intents.
'Neath Charnel house, 'yclept of Innocents
Of my rare genius Paris saw the feats,
Dearly to *Lambert* I sold all my sheets ;
Full well I'm known in *Maubert's* famous square,
And justice, above all was done me there ;
The impious, sometimes, maliciously
My frock have 'e'en reproached with frailty,
With mundane vice, to cheating near allied,—
But I have always conscience on my side."

The monarch heard with pity all he said ;
"Console thyself," he cried, "and nothing dread :
But tell me, friend, if all thy company,
To Marseilles speeding on such embassy,
Were like thyself, of good and honest race?"
"Ay," Frélon cried, "I swear by Christian grace,
For each, as for myself, I'll answer bold,
Since every one is cast in self-same mould.
Abbé *Goyon*, who marches at my side,
Say what they will, of love is justified ;
Never absurd, fictitious nor perplexed,
No calumnies degrade his manly text.

Here is *Chaumé*, with sanctimonious grace,
Whose haughty heart belies his humble face ;
For doctrine too he'd suffer whipping sound ;
There's famous *Gauchat*, who might well confound.
Jew rabbis all—on text and note rare chief,
See yonder advocate without a brief,
Who left for heavenly bliss the wrangling bar,
Sabotier 'tis, than honey sweeter far :
Ah, choicest wit ! saint, priest and tender heart !
'Tis true he played his lord a traitor's part,
But for so little gold and without vice ;
He sold himself, but for the highest price.
Like me, his traffic was in libel writs ;
And where's the harm ? we live but by our wits ;
Employ us and we all will faithful be.
Laurels and glory in these times we see,
Devolve on those who Charnel Houses write :
But great success much envy must excite.
Of scribes and heroes such the fate we view,
Of brilliant wits and devotees a crew,
Since virtue ever was lampooned, poor thing,
Who knows this better than my noble King ?"
Whilst breathing thus his soft, seductive lays,
Two melancholy forms met Charles' gaze,
Each, with two hands, concealed his heavy head.

"Who may these bashful oarsmen be?" he said.
"Behold," replied the weekly gazetteer,
"Two of the justest, most discreet who are here,
Of all who on the limpid sea must row.
One is *Fantin*, a preacher you must know ;
Proud to the poor, but cringing to the great ;
His piety spares those in life's estate,
But all his store of goodly deeds to hide,
Those he confessed and robbed just ere they died.
The other's *Brizet* who his nuns confessed
And for their favours had but little zest,
But sagely piled up hoards for Heav'n above,
His soul replete with pure and saintly love,
He self despised, yet owned of fear the thrall,
Lest to ungodly hands the gold should fall.
Beaumelle, the hindmost of the train is he,
His kindly care endears him most to me,
Best of six rascals who their voices sold
Is he, though lowest in the lists enrolled.
Though, in a fit of absence, while he pored
On those high mysteries by Saints adored,
He, for his own, a neighbour's purse mistook ;
Besides you find such wisdom in his book,
For feeble wits he also knows so well,
How dangerous 'tis the naked truth to tell,

That light deceptive is to feeble eyes,
Which thus are hoodwinked ; wherefore, scribe so wise,
So horrible beholding her to sight,
Resolved he never would her themes indite :
For me, I have aver, most gracious Sire,
In you I see a hero I admire ;
This from my pen posterity shall learn,
Save those whom calumny would make you spurn,
Whose fetid breath all blackens and besets.
Save honest men from fell impiety's nets.
O free us and avenge us, pay us well,
By Frélon's faith, your praises we will tell!"

Then a pathetic argument he'd draw,
'Gainst Englishmen, and for the Salic law ;
Proving that soon, without war's slaughtering ill,
The state he'd rescue with a goose's quill.
The king admired this doctrine so profound ;
Dispensing sweetest smiles on all around,
And with compassion, full assurance gave,
That each might henceforth his protection crave.

Agnes, who heard this touching interview,
Felt tenderest sympathy her soul imbue ;
Her heart is good ; a woman prone to love,

To simple impulse will more often move,
Than one to martial deeds or prudery prone.
"My king," quoth she, "this day you needs must own,
Propitious proves to this most wretched race,
Since on contemplating your loyal face,
Bliss they enjoy and broken are their chains ;
Your's is a front where grace celestial reigns,
Too much these men of law presume to do,
Who make decrees in any name but you !
'Tis thee, my love, they should alone obey,
Pedants they are, in judges' false array.
I know them well, heroes of scrivening,
Pretended guardians of a noble king,
These haughty cits, tyrants arrayed in black,
Their wards of all their revenues they rack ;
Cite them before them in most formal state
Gravely their crown and all to confiscate.
These worthy people crouching at your knee,
Like you are treated by this bold decree,
Protect them, then ; yours is a common cause,
Avenge their wrongs, proscribed by self-same laws."

This argument had touched the monarch's mind,
To clemency his soul was aye inclined.
But Joan whose heart more doughtily was strung,

Insisted still t'was best, that all were hung ;
That Frélon, and all those to such trade born,
Were only good a gallows to adorn.

Dunois, on wisdom more profoundly bent,
Thus spoke, like able soldier, his intent :
“Often,” he said, “in war, we soldiers lack,
Are scant of men of arms and legs and back ;
These fellows have them : in adventures fell,
Assaults, long marches, combattings pell-mell,
We little stand in need of such as write ;
Enlist them all, and by to-morrow’s light,
Instead of oars a musket let them bear ;
Paper they’ve spoiled enough of, and to spare :—
Let them prove useful now on Mars’ great plain.”

The monarch relished well brave Dunois’ strain,
As at his knees appeared this worthy crew,
Sighing and bathing them in sorrow’s dew ;
To pent-house of the fort they went enrolled,
Where Agnes, Charles and all his troop of gold,
The dinner o’er—agreeable evening spent ;
With Bonneau, Agnes on good deeds intent
Took heed that each should share of food an hoard,
The ample refuse of the royal board.

Charles and his escort having amply fed,
With Agnes soon he hied him to his bed ;

When each, awak'ning, from the couch arose,
Surprised they found nor doublet, cloak nor clothes ;
For ruffles Agnes vainly turned the eye,
And necklace boasting pearls of yellow dye ;
The portrait of her lord she found no more.
Fat Bonneau, treasurer of all the store,
In narrow purse confined with skilful care,
No longer finds his master's money there.
Clothes, vessels, linen, vanished to a rag ;
The scrawling cohort 'neath the unfurled flag
Of Nantes' famed pamphleteers, with zealous pain
Had in the night performed their legerdemain ;
Easing of equipage thus light, their Sire—
Pretending warriors fraught with real fire,
As Plato said, but little luxury need.
To 'scape secure, by winding paths, they speed
And at a way-side inn their spoil divide ;
Then take their rest, but write and read beside
A moral treatise, with a Christian view,
On the contempt of pleasure, virtue too.
It proved that men as brothers were allied,
Born equal, all good things they should divide ;
And miseries too, dispensed from Heaven above,
Living in common to share social love.
This saintly book, which since has met our eyes,

Contains a commentary, wond'rous wise,
To tutor and direct the *heart and mind*,
With preface, and to reader counsel kind.

Our clement monarch's household thus amazed,
To grief abandoned, on each other gazed.
Through woods and plains the band they sought to trace,
As good Phineas, erst the Prince of Thrace,
And as Aeneas famed for pious mind,
Were quite aghast with fright and short of wind,
When to their very teeth, just at mid-day,
The glutton Harpies, ravenous for their prey,
From caverns rushing, borne on outstretched wings,
Pouncing, devoured the dinners of those kings.

Timid was Agnes, Dorothy in tears ;
To veil their charms, no ready means appears ;
Bonneau the treasurer so roared his pain,
From peals of laughter they could not refrain ;
"Ah," Bonneau cried, "a loss so fell before
Was ne'er experienced in the battle's war ;
The rascals all have ta'en, I die with grief :
Why did my king afford them kind relief ?
Such is the recompence indulgence gains,
'Tis thus we're paid by men of brilliant brains."

Agnes commiserating, Agnes kind,
For ever courteous, always bland of mind.
Anon replied : "My dear and fat Bonneau,
Fore Heaven, take heed, nor let this ill-starred blow
With new disgust inspire you 'gainst those men
Who wield in letters the most doughty pen.
Good writers have I known, of that I'm sure,
Possessing hearts, just like their hands as pure ;
Who, without robbing, love their master dear,
Doing all good, nor suffering soul to hear ;
Lauding bright virtue, or in prose or verse,
Her feats in acting, abler to rehearse ;
Their fruit, the public good is recognized,
In pleasantness their lessons are disguised,
They touch the heart, ears own the dulcet sound,
Cherished are they, and if Hornets are found
In this our era, bees alike abound."

"Alas !" quoth Bonneau, "what care I for these,
Such trifles vain, your *Hornets* and your bees,
'Tis meet to dine, and I my purse have lost."
Each now essayed to calm his temper crost,
Like heroes to all usage rough inured,
Prepared to soften all the ills endured.
Towards the town they forthwith take the road,
To castle fair, secure and firm abode

Of all those knights and Charles, the mighty King,
Furnished with generous wines and everything.
Our gallant Cavaliers but half equipped,
And fair ones too, of richest vesture stripped,
A sorry crowd that castle came to view,
One foot quite bare, the other *sans* a shoe.

CANTO XIX

Death of the brave and gentle La Trimouille and of the charming Dorothy. The ruthless Tirconel becomes a Carthusian.

O direful war ! of Death the sister dread !
The cut-throat's right, or heroes', as 'tis said ;
Thou monster bloody from the loins derived
Of Atropos : how have thy crimes deprived
This earth of souls ! 'tis thou inspirlest fears,
Wide spreading devastation, blood and tears.
But when the pangs of gentle Love combine
With those of Mars, ah, when the hand benign
Of lovers kind by favours quite subdued,
With stream from heart adored becomes imbrued,
And that her breath to save, he'd life lay low,
An ill-directed dagger deals the blow,
Piercing that bosom, glowing lips so oft
Have sealed with love's ecstatic transports soft ;
Thus seeing, closed on light of radiant day,
Those eyes that erst beamed nought but love's pure ray ;
A scene like this more terror far imparts,
To bosoms blessed with sympathetic hearts,
Than hosts of warriors earning mundane doom,

By monarchs bribed to gallop to the tomb.

Charles, now surrounded by his royal train,
The fatal gift of reason had reta'en,
(Present accurst which men so loudly boast.)
But to encounter the opposing host,
To city ramparts now they wend their way,
This castellated pile their surest stay,
Wherein of Mars the magazines were stored
Of glittering lances pointed spears an hoard,
And cannon cast by Hell's infernal spite,
To hurl us headlong to the realms of night.
Already now the turrets greet their view,
Fast trotting there, the knights their course pursue,
Replete with hope and warmed by valour's glow ;
But La Trimouille, in whom the chief we know
Of Poitou's knights and lover the most kind,
Now slowly ambling with his Dame behind,
And of his flame conversing on the way,
Thus from the path direct was led astray.

In valley watered by a limpid flood,
Deeply embosomed in a cypress wood,
By nature reared in Pyramidic form,
Whose tops a century had braved the storm,

Was found a cave where oft the Naiads fair
And the Sylvani breathed the cooling air ;
A crystal stream, which subterranean strayed,
And formed a sheet, where twenty cascades played,
Near which was spread a carpet ever green :
The wild thyme there, and balmy mint were seen ;
The fragrant jonquil, and the jasmin white,
Seemed all the neighbouring shepherds to invite,
Whisp'ring "Upon this couch of Love recline."
Our youth of Poitou heard the call benign
From heart's recess ; sweet Zephyr's sighs engage—
The time, the place, his tenderness, his age,
But more than all, his lady fanned the fire :
Their steeds they left ; both glowing with desire,
Each on the turf towards the other turns,
Flowers and kisses sweet they cull in turns :
Venus and Mars regarding from above,
Objects ne'er saw more worthy of their love ;
From forest's deep recess echoed around
Of gazing wood-nymphs the applauding sound.
The sparrows, too, and pigeons of the wood,
Example took and found that love was good.

In this same wood a chapel's structure rose,
Sacred to such as in Death's arms repose ;

And thither, evening come, to grave was borne
The corpse of Chandos, from earth's region torn ;
Two parish clerks in surplices all white,
Of *De Profundis* long rehearsed the rite ;
To this sad service Paul Tirconel sped
Not from a taste for pure devotion led,
But from affection for the vanished knight.
Brother he ranked of Chandos, bold in fight,
Haughty like him, debauched and void of fear,
Stranger to love, nor ever shedding tear,
He still for Chandos certain friendship bore,
And in his violent anger now he swore,
By the just God, his vengeance should be wrought,
More spurred by passion than with pity fraught.

He from the corner of a casement spied
The palfreys twain, then grazing side by side ;
T'wards them he goes ; they turn and run away
Straight to the fountain where our lovers lay,
Yielding in secret to the soft control,
Themselves excepted, seeing not a soul.
Bold Paul Tirconel, whose inhuman mind
To neighbours' pleasures ever proved unkind,
Grinding his teeth, exclaimed : "Ye souls most vile,
'Tis thus with transports base you must defile

A hero's tomb, insulting his remains,
Refuse of courts, which nothing pure retains,
Base foes, when some brave Briton yields to fate,
'Tis thus the rare event ye celebrate,
To outrage his loved Manes you presume,
And act your wanton frolics on his tomb.
Speak, is it thou, O knight discourteous,
Made but for courts, and born voluptuous,
Whose feeble hand by fluke of fortune gave
Death to the bravest warrior of the brave?
What! no reply, and ogling still thy fair,
Thy shame thou feelst, thine heart can nothing dare."

To this discourse Trimouille at length replied :
"No sword of mine with his life's blood was dyed,
Heav'n, that conducts all heroes to renown,
Can as it list accord the victor's crown ;
'Gainst Chandos I with honour sought to shine,
Fate willed a hand more fortunate than mine
Should seal on martial plain its dread decree,
And there cut short at once his destiny.
But since that day I have not ceased to yearn,
Some Englishman to punish in my turn."

As freshening breezes which in murmurs creep,

And whistling ruffle surface of the deep,
Swell high their roar, and wrecking barks on strand,
Spread horror o'er the surface of the land ;
So fierce Tirconel and Trimouille in rage
Prepared in direful duel to engage.
By these remarks of wrath and rage unmanned,
Helmless alike, without cuirass they stand.
The Poitevin upon the flowery glade,
Had near his dainty dame of Milan laid
Lance, morion, breast-plate, glaive, his limbs to free,
And trappings all, the more at ease to be.
Who, to make love, requires a ponderous blade ?
Tirconel ever went in armour 'rayed ;
But he beside the catafalque had placed
His cuirass and his helm with gold engraved,
In charge of squire—with costly brassarts too ;
The shoulder belt alone appeared to view,
Appendant, bearing his broad glittering brand ;
He drew it—La Trimouille was quick at hand,
Prepared the brutal islander to brave.
Springing with lightsome bound he grasped his glaive,
And brandished it, and bubbling o'er with hate
Cried, "O, thou cruel monster, do but wait,
What merit thy deserts, thou soon shalt feel,
Cut-throat that in hypocrisy can deal ;

Thus coming with impertinence to view
And eke molest a lover's rendez-vous." "
So saying, on the Briton bold, he burst :
In Phrygia, Menelaus, Hector erst,
Threatened each other and would death devise,
Before fair Helen's sad and guilty eyes.

From cave, air, heav'n and forest, echoes rose
Responsive to sad Dorothea's woes,
Love never with such thrills her breast had fired,
Nor had she felt her tender heart inspired
With equal pain : what, on the very green,
Of pure voluptuousness so late the scene :
"All potent Heav'n ! and must I even here
Lose what I hold on earth supremely dear ?
Adored Trimouille ! barbarian, stay thy rage,
And let my timid breast this wrath assuage."
Saying such words, with rapid feet she came,
She flew with outstretched arms, and eyes aflame,
And rushed betwixt the combatants distrest ;
Her gallant lover's alabaster breast,
Soft as the satin, idolized, adored,
Was by a grievous wound already gored
From blow terrific, parried off with pain ;
The knight thus galled, his rage could not retain,

And headlong rushed the Briton to subdue,
But Dorothy was just between the two.
O ! God of love ! O ! Heav'n ! O ! direful blow !
What faithful lover e'er the truth can know,
And not with tears my script pathetic lave,
When of all lovers the most fair and brave,
Graced with all favours that she could bestow,
Could deal his charming mistress such a blow !
That fateful steel, that dread, ensanguined blade
Transpierced the heart for love's soft transports made,
Which ever burned for him her soul desired :
She staggered, sighing forth, as she expired,
Name of "Trimouille—Trimouille !" then direful death,
Grim spectre, seized upon her fleeting breath,
She felt it, turning once more on the light
Those eyes unclosed, which an eternal night
Was soon to seal : her feeble hand, the breast
Once more of her fond lover fondly pressed.
Vowing to cherish an immortal glow,
Forth ebb'd her life in sobs and sighing low.
"I love—I love !" in falter'ring accents broke.
Such the last words this faithful lady spoke.
'Twas vainly said, alas ! for Trimouille too,
Nought but death's shadows understood or knew,
They wrapped him round ; he falls upon her charms,

Unconsciously, and lies within her arms,
Bathed in her blood, and yet not knowing aught :
At sight so tender and with horror fraught
Aghast and chilled, awhile Tirconel stood,
His senses fled, and frozen was life's flood :
So, erst if heathen records tell us true,
Was Atlas, whom no feeling could subdue,
When for obduracy 't was Heaven's decree,
Changed into flinty rock his form should be.

But pity, gentle nature's soft behest,
Dispensed to quell the fury of the breast,
Awoke at length within his hardened heart ;
He joined the fair, assistance to impart,
And found two portraits as her person fair,
Portraits preserved by Dorothy with care,
For times long past, thro' adventures rare.
The one, blue eyes of La Trimouille portrays,
His tresses blonde, his proud and gentle traits,
Where noble courage, grace the most refined,
In happy unison are well combined.
Tirconel said : "He well deserved her heart !"
But at the second picture does he start !
Himself he gazed at, trait for trait designed ;
O ! what surprise ! — as straight he called to mind,

That journeying once to Milan's famous town,
He Carminetta knew, of fair renown,
Gallant and noble, kind to Albion's race,
When quitting after months' elapse that place,
Finding herself with child already great,
He gave her, absence to alleviate,
This portrait traced by the accomplished hand
Of great Bellini, of the Lombard band.
'T was Dorothy's own mother. — Truth, how dire !
All is explained, Tirconel is her sire !

Though haughty he, indifferent and cold,
His heart, if probed, would generous germs unfold ;
When by such characters the bitter draught
Of poignant agony is amply quaffed,
Its dire effects impressions strong impart,
Which ne'er assail an ordinary heart,
Too open to receive warm passion's flow ;
As brass or steel more powerfully flow
Than rushes burnt, when trifling flame they meet.
Our Briton viewed his daughter at his feet,
Who Death had glutted with her cherished blood,
Her he considered, as from eyes a flood
Of tears flowed fast, he ne'er had wept before.
With streams he bathed her, kissing o'er and o'er,

His loud cries echoing thro' the woods around,
As fraught with anguish, he breathed grief profound ;
And cursing fortune, war and direful death,
Felt quite o'ercome, bereft of voice and breath.

Thy lids unclosed at sounds so fraught with fate,
Trimouille, once more thou saw'st the day, and straight
For the remaining light possessed no charm ;
Shudd'ring thou didst withdraw thy murd'rous arm,
Which had with agonizing fervour prest
The lily beauties of that cherished breast.
His sword hilt placed he on the ensanguined plain,
Then on its cruel point he rushed amain ;
The mortal blow transpierces : soon a tide
Of crimson blood his prostrate mistress dyed.
The horrid screams that came from Tirconel,
Attract the squires, the priests run up as well ;
Affrighted, gazing at the cruel deed,
Their stony hearts as well as his could bleed,
And, but for them, Tirconel by self-doom
Had followed the poor lovers to the tomb.

At length, the horrors of his anguish o'er,
And master of his faculties once more,
He caused the clay-cold lovers to be placed

Upon a litter made of spears enlaced ;
Thus were they borne by knights in sad array,
To the King's Court, while tears bedewed the way.
Tirconel, who made violence his guide
Was ever prompt on matters to decide,
And from the hour this fatal deed took place,
Women he hates and all the woman race.
His beard grew long, no valet with him sped,
Mournful his eye, nor word he ever said ;
His heart sore pent, and in this sombre mood,
He roamed to Paris, leaving Loire's bright flood :
Ere long he gained, at Calais, ocean's strand,
Embarked, and safely trod his native land ;
'Twas there he took the robe monastical
Of Holy Bruno : ennui to dispel
Betwixt the world and him the Heavens he set,
And would himself as well as men forget.
And thus with thoughts on melancholy bent,
His days were past in everlasting Lent ;
'Twas there he lived, no sentence e'er breathed he,
And yet, he never proved a devotee.

As Charles and Agnes and the martial Maid
Behold thus pass this doleful cavalcade,
No sooner they the generous pair espied,

Happy so long, and erst bright beauty's pride,
All bathed in blood, their forms with dust besmeared,
Than struck with dread each personage appeared,
While every eye the glistering drops distilled ;
Each sympathetic heart with anguish thrilled.
In Troy, they wept not thus, the bloody day
When Hector of grim Death became the prey ;
And when Achilles, gentle victor he,
Bid him be dragged with so much charity,
His feet in bonds, with poor down-trailing head,
Behind his car which trampled o'er the dead ;
Alive, at least, was fair Andromachê,
When her spouse crossed the stream of agony.

Agnes, the lovely Agnes, shook by fears,
Whose arms the King entwined, with bitter tears
Exclaimed : "My love, alas ! we both some day
Thus to the charnel house shall pass away ;
Ah, that my soul, as well as body too,
In death's domain may be at one with you."

At their complaints, which in their bosoms bear
A faint affliction and a gloomy fear,
Joan, who assumed that martial tone and loud,
The happy organ of her courage proud,

Cried out: "'Tis not by wailings and by sighs,
By tears, by sobbings and such doleful cries,
That we may vengeance for Love's sufferers take,
'Tis blood, let's arm to-morrow for his sake ;
Behold, O King, of Orléans, yonder walls,
Sad ramparts, subject now to Britain's thralls,
Its plains still smoking, by fell carnage fed
Of those, who by your royal prowess bled,
As in your suite the Gallic legions went.
Let us prepare, pursue the grave intent,
This debt deserve the bleeding shades we see,
La Trimouille and his dear-loved Dorothy :
'Tis meet a King should conquer and not weep ;
Sweet Agnes, in oblivion, prithee, sleep
Those soft emotions of a tender heart ;
Agnes to her royal lover should impart
Thoughts worthier of his crown and station high."
"Leave me alone !" quoth Agnes, "let me cry."

CANTO XX *

How Joan fell into a strange temptation—The gentle audacity of her ass; the noble resistance of the Maid.

Woman, like man, is but a vessel weak ;
To put your trust in virtue never seek :
Fair is the vessel but it's made of clay,
A nothing breaks it ; mend it though you may,
The enterprise is often somewhat hard ;
With due precaution such a vase to guard
Without a spot, is but a vision vain,
Which, from Eve's husband onwards, none attain ;
As witness Lot, Samson who lost his eyes,

* In place of the first 30 lines of this canto, there are found in some editions only the following lines :

How is revenge a passion dire and fell,
Harmful to men, unpitying as well !
Torture it is, a seizure of the heart,
It is, in any case the devil's part.
Of Grisbourdon, *etc.*

David the Saint, and Solomon the wise,
And you, sweet sex and fair, of soft intent,
Or in the new or in the ancient Testament,
In history or legend though you live !
O piōus sex, I easily forgive
Your little ruses and your light caprice,
Your sweet refusals, charming artifice ;
But there are certain cases I confess,
And certain tastes I can excuse no less.
I've seen, sometimes, a puppet, very ape,
Fat, stunted, red, all hairy 'neath his cape,
Caressed, like some fair gallant in your arms ;
Then I grieved greatly for your tender charms.
Perhaps, worth ten times more a winged ass,
Than fop in clothes arrayed, or dandy crass.
O sex adorable, to whom I've vowed
The gift of verse with which I've been endowed ;
For your instruction, meet 'tis to display
Our Joan's mistake, and how her handsome grey
A moment eke had caused her wits to stray.
It is not I, but Tritemus the wise,
That worthy Abbé, who this story cries.

Of Grisbourdon, the spirit damned and rude,
Who, as you know, within his copper stewed,

While he blasphemed, would still occasion seek,
Upon the maiden proud, vengeance to wreak,
Through whom, in realms above, by broad-sword crost,
His patron's body its head sadly lost.
"Beelzebub, my father!" thus he cried,
"In some foul sin, oh, can you not decide
This Joan, to fall, albeit so austere?
For me, I think, your honour's rooted there." *
Just as he spoke, alive with Fury's flame,
Hermaphrodix to the dire river came,
With holy water moist his visage yet,
The amphibious animal on vengeance set,
Came to address the author of all ill.

* Variant:

For me I think your honour's rooted there,
It needs not of high rhetoric much aid,
The Temptor immemorial to persuade
His ancient office to take up again.
This craftsman most accurst of every bane,
Hastened at once upon the earth to spy
What did the friends of England occupy,
And to what state of body and of mind,
After that conflict fierce, was Joan resigned.
The King, Dunois and martial Joan, all three
Full wearied out with war's satiety,
Within their fort at last, in shelter were,
Waiting till some fresh succour should be there;
The breach of the besieged once more restored,
Was shut 'gainst entry of the assaulting horde;

Behold them there, all three, conspiring still
Against a woman! Yet we often see
For a seduction, there's no need of three.
Long to this trio had it been revealed
That Joan beneath her petticoat concealed
The keys of the beleaguered town ; that more,
The fate of France, afflicted then so sore,
Was to the fortune of her mission knit.
The Devil has a most inventive wit,

Into retreat has passed the hostile sword.
The citizens, King Charles and Bedford too,
Supped hastily and to their couches flew.

Muses! now quake at the adventure rare,
Which to posterity ye shall declare ;
And readers! ye, to whom the Heavens ensure
Tastes virtuous and tenderness most pure,
To master Denis, pious vows submit
That a most heinous sin was not commit.

You will remember how I promised you,
To write the history with accent true,
Of that jack-ass, whom wings a couple grace.
The night of time hides from the human race,
What the designs of the winged ass had been,
When carried on his golden wings was seen
Dunois, who travelled to the Lombard plain,
Of whom the ass had oft felt jealous pain.
When many a time he chanced to bear the Maid,
Within his heart he felt, *etc.*

And went with speed upon the Earth to spy
What did the friends of England occupy,
And to what state of body and of mind,
After that conflict fierce was Joan resigned.
The King, Dunois, Agnes at that time true,
The Maid, the ass, Bonneau and Bonifoux,
Within the fort at length in shelter were,
Waiting till some fresh succour should be there.
The breach of the besieged once more restored,
Was shut 'gainst entry of the assaulting horde ;
Into retreat is sped the hostile sword.
The citizens, King Charles and Bedford too,
Supped hastily and to their couches flew.
Muses ! now quake at the adventure rare,
Which to posterity ye shall declare.
And Readers ! ye, to whom the Heavens ensure
Tastes virtuous and tenderness most pure,
To Dunois and to Denis vows submit
That a most heinous sin was not commit.

My former promise, you remember well,
The marvels and the gallant feats to tell
Of long-eared Pegasus, who for the Maid
And for Dunois, the enemy dismayed ;
You saw him, with his wings all golden, soar,

When Dunois to the Lombard plain he bore :
Jealous was he when he returned once more.
You are aware that, when he bore the Maid,
Within his heart he felt the fire was laid
Of that fair spark, that's not so sweet as keen,
Soul, source and spring of all things that have been,
Which in the air, where woods or waters dwell,
Bodies produces and inspires as well.
That sacred fire of which there rests to-day,
Within this worn-out world so scant a ray,
From Heav'n was stolen, Pandora to inspire,
And since that time the torch has no more fire :
All things are withered ; force which fades away
Of nature in this most unhappy day,
Imperfect loves can only now create.
If still there lives a flame that's animate,
One germ of those high principles divine,
Venus Urania has not the sign ;
Nor look for it in weak humanity :—
The heroes rather seek of Arcady.

Fair Celadons, whom your victorious flames
Have wreathed in flowery bands, whom passion tames,
Soft lovers in cuirass, or cassocked sirs,
Priests, prelates, colonels or councillors,

Folk well to do, eke cordeliers, alas !
Where love's concerned, distrust ye of an ass.
That famous *Golden Ass* the Latins found,
By metamorphosis so well renowned,
To this, our ass, in sooth, resembled naught :
That was a man, a thing of small import.

Abbé Tritemus, wise mind of his age,
Than pedant Larchet more discreet and sage,
When this fair history he dared display,
Was terrified far more than one can say,
That he must need to dim posterity
Of such excess transmit the memory.
With fingers three he'd hardly dare engage
His agitated pen upon the page ;
So let it drop ; then 'gan his soul assuage
Of its alarm, as he would meditate
Upon the Devil's power and evil state.

Of all the race of man, this guilty foe
Is, by profession, tempter as you know.
The folk he meets, he's very prone to win ;
This formidable father of all sin,
Rival of God, seduced my mother dear
At evening, a woodland's corner near,

Within his garden. This deceitful snake,
An apple, with a curse on't, bid her take ;
That he did worse than this, some even say.
From blessed Eden she was chased away ;
And since that time, at home, the Prince of Hell
Has ruled our daughters and our wives as well,
Sooth instances good Tritemus has set
Of this effect which his own eyes have met.
Thus the great man relates how came to pass,
The shameless insolence of the holy ass.

The sturdy Joan, all vermeil to the view,
Her face by poppied sleep refreshed anew,
Between her sheets secluded modestly,
Resumes her life and her high destiny.
Her young heart flattered by so much success,
Did not to Denis all the fame confess ;
She 'gan conceive a certain vanity.
Vexed was St. Denis, as he well might be ;
To punish her he left her for a while,
That all unwatched, her senses might beguile.
Denis, who loved her well, desired his Joan
Should feel what it is like to be alone,
And know that woman, in whatever case,
A patron needs, if she would keep in grace.

She was just ready to become the prey
Of a dread snare the Demon sent her way:
One wanders far, when once one goes astray.

The great Deceiver, who neglecteth naught,*
Seized his occasion, seized it with forethought.
He's everywhere; and now with skill he came
Within the ass's skin his wits to frame;
His tongue he taught of sound significance,
And tuned his raucous bray to eloquence,
Instructing him in that most subtile art,
Which Bernard, like old Ovid, knew by heart.
The enlightened ass put modesty away,
And softly from the stable made his way
To the bed-side where Joan, reposeful, lay,
And dreamed of all the labours of the day;
Then squatting very gently by her side,
He praised her for the heroes who had died;
Invincible she was and fair no less:
Thus did of old the snake's seductiveness,
When our first mother he desired to gain,

* Variant:

*The great Deceiver, who neglecteth naught,
But round us roams, with whom our paths are fraught,
Seized his occasion, etc.*

A flatt'ring compliment began the campaign.
The arts to please and praise are surely one.
"O Heavens!" cried Joan, "alas! I am undone.
Saint Luke! Saint Mark! What is it that I hear?
Is it mine ass? What prodigy is here?
Mine ass—he speaks! he even speaks me fair."

The ass still kneeling with a tranquil mien,
Cried to her: "D'Arc! no miracle is seen;
In me the ass of Canaan you behold;
Nourished and bred long time by Balaam old;
Balaam was priest amongst the Pagan horde;
I was a Jew, and but for me, my lord
Had cursed that elect people with good will,
Whence, doubtless, had arrived exceeding ill.
The Heavens just, my zeal did recompense! *

* Variant:

The Heavens just, my zeal did recompense!
To Adam first, I owed obedience.
Adam with life immortal was endowed,
I with the same; the master then allowed
That scissors of the Parcae cruel should spare
The thread which bound me to my years so fair.
Eternal spring was at that time my share
Within our primal parents' garden fair,
In Adam's company — I was his mount —
While generous nature from her bounteous fount,
Which ne'er knew drought, was lavish of her care.

To Enoch next, passed my obedience :
Enoch with life immortal was endowed,
I, with the same ; the Master then allowed

This garden's master, ever debonnaire,
All things save one permitted : understand !
A life of chastity was his command ;
For any ass, oh, what a piteous case,
Young and unfettered in so fair a place,
Master of all, I had o'er all things right,
Save over love, whether by day or night.
Obedient more was I than your first man
Who for an apple won eternal ban ;
I fought my temperament victoriously,
Subdued my flesh, had no more frailty ;
Virgin I lived ; now, know ye by what grace ?
There was no single she-ass in the place !
Thus I saw pass, contented with my life,
A thousand years and more — without a wife.

Soon 't was the pleasure of the thunder King,
Maker of Heav'n and Earth and everythin',
To ransom man's captivity anew :
He made himself a man — what's worse, a Jew !
Pantherus, Joseph and the dark Marie,
Unconscious did this deed of piety.
Unto her spouse the fair one said : "Farewell,"
To bed was brought of bastard — God as well.
He was first followed by the baser sort,
Johns, Matthews, children — folk of no import ;
God's face to great men, as to wise, is dim,
The statesman rails, the humble follow him ;
The court of Herod and the gentle-folk
A bastard God of flesh will not invoke ;

That scissors of the Parcae cruel should spare
The thread which bound me to my years so fair.
Immortal spring was at that time my share.
Our garden's master, ever debonnaire
All things save one permitted: understand,

And of this flesh, devoted to the race
Low Justice Pilate makes but little case.
Albeit, before, beneath the lash he went,
And rood was raised for his chastisement,
His public entry was a great event.
'T was thing arranged, religion could not pass,
That he should enter Zion on an ass,
This donkey was predicted by Isaiah,
Ezechiel, Baruch and by Jeremiah:
Within the law it was a leading case;
In me, O Joan! you see this ass's face!
The dire Archangel then received command,
Who guards the garden with his ruthless hand,
Me to release from that enclosure fair;
Straightway I went my way a God to bear.
Our preference the oracles imposed;
At every step were miracles disclosed,
Pox, coughs and cancer, itch and fever too,
Vanished forthwith, at our diviner view;
"Long live the King of glory!" cried the throng;
The rest to common knowledge doth belong.
Lost the creator was to public eyes,
But soon was resurrected in disguise.
I, being faithful, with his mother lived,
And stabled ill, I very badly thrived.
Upon the day of her Assumption, she
Left me by will a small annuity;
Within that house a thousand years I stay,

A life of chastity was his command ;
For any ass, oh, what a piteous case !
Young and unfettered in so fair a place,
Master of all, I had o'er all things right,
Save over love, whether by day or night.
Better obeyed I, than that witless one
Who, for an apple's sake lost everyone.
I fought my temperament victoriously,
Subdued my flesh, had no more frailty ;
Virgin I lived ; now, know ye by what grace ?
There was no single she-ass in the place !
Thus I saw pass, contented with my life,
A thousand years and more, without a wife.
When from the heart of Greece came Bacchus fair,
The thyrsis, glory, drunkenness to bear ;
In lands o'errun by Ganges' gentle rain
My trumpet followed in that hero's train :
And still the Indians, civilized by us,
Sing their defeat and my name glorious :

Until the holy mansion, one fine day
That town unworthy left, to come no more,
But crossed the sea to the more pleasant shore,
Where the famed treasures of Loretto lay.
There of the Lord I served His maids all day,
Loved by them all, who was more maid than they.
At last above, *etc.*

I am Silenus, more renowned in song
Than all the rest whom Bacchus led along.
It is my worth alone, my single name
Which is the crown of Apuleius' fame.

“At last above, in plains of azure blue,
When English George, who little loveth you,
St. George the proud, who ever loves to fight,
Would have an English steed for his delight ;
When Holy Martin, famous for his cloak,
A courser e'en more beautiful bespoke ;
Denis, not wishing to be left behind,
Like them, must have a courser of some kind :
He chose me out and called me to his side, *

* Variant:

*He chose me out and called me to his side ;
With a gold curry comb he combed my hair,
While gentle Jesus' most paternal care
Made me a gift of two bright wings beside :
And while the angels of the heavens pressed
To waft the mansion o'er the Ocean's breast,
To heavenly vaults above I took my flight.
John's eagle, Matthew's ox, with much delight
Received me in that high place with carouse ;
With me the spotless lamb was wont to brouse ;
There did I brave that proud and haughty steed,
Who by high destiny was first decreed
Luther to serve, and then John Calvin's need.
Nectar I drank, ambrosia was my food ;*

And of two shining wings made gift beside ;
Upon which wings to Heavenly vaults I glide,
There was I fêted by St. Roch's huge hound,

But oh, my Joan, a life so great and good,
Is far beneath the ecstasy which warms
My veins in contemplation of your charms.
Eagle, ox, horse and lamb can not compare
With the rich treasure of your beauty rare.
Above all other occupations far,
Where he has called me, my benigner star,
Know that the happiest, most to my will,
Which most, perhaps, I worthy am to fill,
Is but to serve 'neath your august commands.
When I left Heaven and the empyrean strands,
On you my fortune and my honour met ;
Nay, verily I've not left Heaven yet,
I still am there ; for in your eyes 't is set."
Thus spake the Ass with graceful elegance ;
Crowning his flattery and eloquence,
With a propitious gesture that Baron
Knew not, nor Bourdaloue nor Masillon.
This charming history, delightful tale,
This innocence with which he would prevail,
And that unrivalled gesture could not fail ;
But had so quick and prompt effect on Joan
As with her Dunois she had never known.

Whilst thus his impudence accosts her ear,
The great Dunois, whose bedchamber was near,
Hearing, was seized with wonderment immense
At the bold strains of so much eloquence.
What hero spoke he straightway wished to see,
And whom Love sent to him in rivalry,
He enters, sees (O wonder ! prodigy !)

Anthony's pig a faithful friend I found ;—
O pig Divine, emblem by monks confest !

Two lengthy ears adorn the swain who sighs :
He sees, but cannot yet believe his eyes.
Of Deborah, the most redoubted lance
Stood by the pillow of the Maid of France ;
He seized the stock ; the Devil's evil might
Against this holy steel was in poor plight.
The great Dunois is fain the fiend to chase ;
The devil quakes and prompt to have the place
The ass uplifts and through the window flies,
He bears him by a road across the skies,
Within those halls, of innocence the bane,
Where Conculix confined in fell domain
Agnes the fair, and sundry knights as well,
Britons and Gauls within his trap who fell,
Pris'ners in that accurst purlieu of Hell.

This Conculix, since that most cruel time,
When the bold Bastard and the Maid sublime
With insult unfeffaced had smote him sore,
And burst the barriers of his palace door,
To offer suppers more was little fain,
To cavaliers entrapped in his domain.
He treated them indeed, in ruder kind,
And kept them in a cavern dark confined.
There in long cloak his chancellor would go,
Bearing to those forlornly left below,
The sacred message of Conculix' will.
"There you must fast, of water drink your fill,
And once a week shall stripes be on you laid,
Until the moment when some man or maid
Prepared a common duty to fulfil,
Shall so succeed to save your backs from ill.

With a gold curry-comb my coat was drest ;
Nectar I drank, ambrosia was my food :
But oh, my Joan, a life so great and good
Is far beneath the ecstasy which warms

Try then to love ; it needs one of you six,
Must burn with all his heart for Conculix :
'T is love he wants ; and sure he's worth the pain.
If none of you such passion can attain,
Whipped ye shall be ; that is his purpose plain."
Thus he declared and straight departed thence,
Leaving the prisoners in conference.

But who would sacrifice himself for all ?

Agnes remarked : "I see no way at all,
The stings of Love to feel in such an hour :
The gift to love lies not within our power ;
Faithful am I unto my King of France."

As thus she spake, she cast a pitious glance
Towards Monrose, with sad and tearful air.

Monrose declared : "For me, I love a Fair,
I would not leave her though the Gods should call,
An hundred Conculix tempt not at all,
For her, I'm ready many stripes to take."

"And so am I, for my dear lover's sake,"
Cried Dorothy ; "There is no trick of hate
Which Love's sweet charm can not alleviate ;
When one is twain, what torture's left to Fate!"

Her La Trimouille at such soft argument,
Falls at her feet, in sweet abandonment,
Joy comes his bitter sorrow to allay ;
The confessor coughs twice, then hastes to say :
"Gentles, I too, was young upon a day ;
That time is gone, and age's wrinkles trace.
Their tell-tale furrows all about my face.
What can I do ? Alas, I am this thing,

My veins, in contemplation of your charms.
Denis nor George, nor dog nor pig compare
With the rich treasure of your beauty rare.
Above all other occupations far,
Whither has called me my benigner star,
Know, that the happiest, most to my will,
Which most, perhaps, I worthy am to fill,
Is but to serve 'neath your august commands.
When I left Heav'n and the empyrean strands,
In you my fortune and my honour met ;
Nay, verily, I've not left Heaven yet,
I still am there ; for in your eyes 'tis set."

At such discourse, that modesty might blame,
Joan felt within her breast quick anger's flame.
To love an ass, and yield to him her pride !
There was dishonour she could not abide,
Who lived, her innocence preserved to tell,

Dominican, confessor of my King ;
How could I help you from this servile state?"
Paul Tirconel, with courage all elate,
Rises and cries : "Behold, it shall be me!"
At these brief words said with audacity,
Once more in captive hearts arose hope's flame.
To Conculix, when the next morning came,
A letter writ in tender pharse Paul sent,
(By gaoler's hand to chancellor it went).
With it he joined a little madrigal,
In newest mode and most original.

From muleteers and knights of France as well,
Who had, supported by high Heaven's grace,
In mortal fight brought Chandos to disgrace !
Yet, Heavens ! this ass has a deserving air,
Can he not with the loved she-goats compare,
Whom the Calabrians with flowers array ?

"Nay," said she, "put these horrid thoughts away."
Yet in her heart, these thoughts a tempest formed,
And all her mind was troubled and deformed.
So, on the ocean deep, one oft may spy.
The haughty tyrants of the waves and sky,
One rushing from the distant Austral caves,
While one from icy Boreal regions raves,
Some wandering ship on Ocean to appal,
Seeking Ceylon, Sumatra or Bengal :
Anon the hull seems lifted to the sky,
Then near the rocks is hurried perilously ;
Then comes the abyss with its engulfing swell
Seeming to issue from the jaws of Hell.

That cunning boy, to whose rule is consigned
Asses and gods, the whole of human-kind,
From heights of Heaven, his bow in hand the while,
Looked down upon the Maid with sweetest smile.
Now secretly much stirred was Joan's great heart,

And flattered that her form should thus impart
So great effect ; that on her so should brood
Such heavy senses and a soul so rude.
She stretched her lily hand towards her swain,
With scarce a thought ; then drew it back again.
She blushed, afraid, condemns herself, alas !
Then reassured, exclaims to him: "Fair Ass,
Chimerical the hope you entertain ;
Respect my duty and my glory's chain ;
Too broad the differences that us divide :
I never could your tenderness abide ;
O have a care, and urge me not too far !"
The ass replied : "Love levels every bar :
Think of the Swan, by Leda not disdained ;
Nathless, an honest woman she remained.
Know you the daughter unto Minos born,
Who for a bull's sake heroes held in scorn,
And for her comely beast bore many a pain ?
Know, by an eagle Ganymede was ta'en,
How Philyra her lavish favours threw
On the Sea-God, whom as a horse she knew."

The Devil, while thus he argued from his store,
The Devil, first author of all fabled lore,
Furnished him fresh examples, for the case,

So that the ass might take our *Savants'* place.
Whilst thus his subtle phrases meet her ear
The great Dunois, whose bed-chamber was near,
Hearing, was seized with wonderment immense
At the bold strains of so much eloquence.
What hero speaks, he straightway longed to see,
And whom Love sent to him in rivalry.
He enters, sees (O, wonder ! prodigy !)
Two lengthy ears adorn the swain who sighs :
He sees, but cannot yet believe his eyes.
Venus of old felt thus of shame the dread,
When o'er her wiry net of brass was spread,
And the wretch Vulcan to the gods afar
Showed her all naked 'neath the god of war.
Joan after all was not subdued, 'tis plain ;
Denis to comfort her was always fain,
Near the abyss, her steps he guarded still,
And snatched her from the dire effects of ill.
Indignant Joan within herself retired,
As at his post will sleep the sentry tired,
Who, as the first alarms his senses greet,
Springs up and sudden stands upon his feet,
Rubs either eye, attires himself and lo !
Seizes his arms, prepared to meet the foe.
Of Deborah the most redoubted lance

Stood by the pillow of the Maid of France.
It rescued her from perils every day ;
She seized the stock, the fiend's power to dismay,
Who ne'er could stand against its might divine.
Dunois and Joan attacked the fiend malign ;
Foul Satan fled, and while he hideous cried,
The woods of Orléans, Blois and Mantes replied,
And Poitou's donkeys who in meadow strayed,
In harsh tones answering, discordant brayed.
The Devil sped, fain in his course so fleet
The British to avenge and his defeat.
So flew like arrow into Orléans straight,
And passed of Louvet president the gate.
Then entered snug the body of the dame
Sure of controlling there the mental flame ;
It was his chattel and he knew full well
The secret sin whereof she owned the spell,
He knows she loves, that Talbot fascinates ;
The wily snake her conduct indicates,
Spurs and inflames her, hoping in the end,
Some friendly succour he may thus extend,
And thro' the gates of Orléans lead amain
The valiant Talbot and his fiery train ;
Yet while he works for England which he likes,
He knows 'tis really for himself he strikes.

CANTO XXI

The chastity of Joan demonstrated—Malice of the Devil—Rendez-vous given to Talbot by the wife of Louvet, the President. Services rendered by Brother Lourdis—Repentance of the Ass—Exploits of the Maid—Triumph of King Charles VII.

Experience hath taught my reader's mind,
That the sweet Deity as boy designed,
Whose sports, an infant's gambols ne'er unfold,
Two different quivers hath, his shafts to hold ;
One, only filled with tender, striking darts,
Void of all pain and danger, wounds imparts,
Which, time increasing, penetrate the breast.
Like fire consuming are the darts which rest,
All on a sudden their fell course they wing,
And to the senses five destruction bring ;
With lively red, the face illuminate,
Seems with new being to be animate ;
With fresher blood the body gleams and glows,
The eyes grow bright ; one nothing heeds or knows.
Water boils noisily upon the fires,

Escapes above its limits and expires,
But gives no echo, faithful at the last,
Of those desires you follow over fast.

Blasphemers,—all unworthy to be known,
Who have defiled the glorious name of Joan,
Vile scribes who, fascinated by your lies,
Corrupt the wisest writings of the wise,—
Pretend my Joan, of ever maiden fame,
For a gray ass conceived an evil flame :
In print you say she fought a losing fight,
At once her sex and virtue you indict.
Ye scurvy writers, scribes of infamy,
To honest dames, pray, more respectful be,
Nor ever tell that Joan had gone astray !
No learned man in such an error lay.
The actions and the times you do confuse,
The very rarest miracles abuse ;
The ass and his amazing feats respect,
Talents the like of his, you can't expect,
E'en if your ears be longer than his own.
And if, in such a case, the maiden Joan
Saw, with an eye that satisfaction fired,
The fresh incentives that her form inspired,
'Twas but that like her sex she's passing vain ;

'Twas love of self, not love that loves again.

To set before you in its fullest light,
Lustre of Joan, untarnishable, bright ;
To prove to you, how to the Devil's wiles,
And ass's fire, whose eloquence beguiles,
Her noble heart was never overthrown,
Know that another lover had our Joan.
It is Dunois, as nobody ignores,
The gallant bastard, whom her heart adores.
A donkey one may heed without disdain,
And e'en to please him feel a pleasure vain ;
So innocent and light an escapade,
Love that is constant never yet betrayed.

'Tis an admitted fact in history,
That gallant Dunois, famed in chivalry,
Was wounded with a golden shaft Love drew
From his first quiver, and unerring threw.
But ever his vain fondness he'd subdue ;
His haughty heart no weakness ever knew ;
Too well the Kingdom and the King he served,
Their interest the one law he observed.

He knows thy precious maidenhead, O Joan !

Of victory is the reward alone ;
Both Denis he respected, and thy charms ;
Like faithful hound, courageous 'mid alarms,
Who nobly struggling against hunger's stings,
The partridge he might eat to master brings.
Yet seeing that the ass of heavenly fame
Had spoken and confessed his direful flame,
Dunois conceived that he might speak in turn :
Sages forget themselves sometimes, we learn.

No doubt a flagrant folly it had proved,
To sacrifice the state for her he loved.
'Twas all to lose, and Joan still wrapped in shame
That thus an ass had dared confess his flame,
Resisted ill her hero's ardent speech ;
Love in her soul was fain to make a breach.
All had been done, when lo ! her patron bright,
His ray detachèd from the heavenly height.
That golden beam, his glory and his steed,
Bearing his Saintly form in time of need,
As when he sought, impelled by pressing call,
A virgin flower to rescue Orléans' wall ;
This heavenly ray that pierced Joan's better sense,
All sentiment profane removed from thence.
"Dear Bastard stop" : she cried, "O ! shun the crime,

Our Loves are reckoned, 'tis not yet the time ;
Let us naught mar, nothing of our destiny,
My solemn faith is plighted but to thee,
Thine I protest the virgin bud shall be :
Let us await until your vengeful arm,
Your virtues, which in Britons strike alarm,
Have driven the usurper from the land :
Then over laurels our soft bed may stand."

At this address the Bastard calmed his rage,
He heard the oracle, submitted sage ;
Joan then received his hommage, pure and sweet,
And modestly returned him, for a treat,
Of kisses thirty, eloquent though chaste,
Such as fond brothers with their sisters taste.
Each bridled in the torrent of desire,
And modestly agreed to quench the fire :
Denis looked on ; the Saint was satisfied,
And straight his projects hastened to decide.

That night bold Talbot, chief of high renown,
By ruse resolved to enter Orléans' town,
A new idea in haughty British breast,
To courage more than cunning owing zest.
O God of Love ! O power by frailty known !

O fatal love! how nearly hadst thou thrown
That citadel of France in hostile hands,
Success un hoped of those who hate our lands;
What Bedford, in experience grown old,
And Talbot, sought to do, albeit bold,
And failed at last, O Love you did essay!
Dear Child, you're all our ill, and still you play.

If, in his course of conquering career,
A gentle shaft to heart of Joan could veer;
Another arrow from his bow-string flew,
Dame President's five senses to subdue.
With hand he struck her, which triumphant rules,
Directing dart that turns us all to fools.
You've seen already that grim escalade,
Assault of blood and horrid cannonade,
Those brave attempts and all those desp'rate fights,
Within, without and on the ramparts' heights;
When Talbot and his fiery following train,
The ramparts and the gates had burst and ta'en;
When on them from the houses' tops there broke
Sword, flame and grisly death at one fell stroke.
The fiery Talbot, with his agile walk,
Tramples the dying, through the town to stalk;
He upsets all things, crying out aloud,

“My Britons, enter and disarm the crowd !”
Much he resembled then to War’s great God,
Beneath his footsteps, echoing the sod ;
When Discord and Bellona and high Fate,
As minister of Death, arm him with hate.

Dame President, within her walls, a breach
That looked upon a ruined cot could reach,
And through this hole her gallant could espy ;
His golden helm, where feathers curl and fly,
His mailed arm, and those live sparks of flame
Which from his pupils’ orbits darting came,
That carriage proud, that demi-god’s great air :
Dame President was almost in despair,
With shame dumbfounded and bereft of wits.
As once, when in her grated stage-box sits
Madame Audon, whom love has sore inflamed,
And ogles Baron, actor justly famed ;
With ardent eyes she feasts upon his face,
His rich adornment, gestures and his grace ;
Mingled with his, her accents in tones low
Love’s flames received, her senses owned the flow.

In Dame Louvet the fiend was throned in state,
Acquiring post, though not importunate ;

And that archangel black, Hell's ravenous King,
The Devil or Love, which means the self-same thing,
In cap and traits of Suzon was arrayed ;
(Long time within that house she'd been the maid)
A girl both active and instructed too,
Dressing and frizzing, bearing *billets-doux*,
In double *rendez-vous* a careful elf,
The one for mistress, t'other for herself ;
Satan, concealed beneath her semblance well,
Thus held harangue with our important belle.
"Alike my heart and talents you must know,
I wish to aid your bosom's ardent glow ;
Your interest now alone concerns my mind.
This night, my own first cousin, as I find,
Stands sentry at a certain postern gate,
Where naught against your fame can doubt create ;
In secret there bold Talbot you may meet ;
Dispatch a note, my cousin is discreet,
Your message, trust me, he'll perform with care."
Dame President then penned a billet fair,
Impassioned, tender words that strike the goal,
And with voluptuous ardour fire the soul ;
Devil's dictation in it well was seen :
Talbot was amorous, his wits were keen,
He swore his fair at *rendez-vous* to meet,

But vowed alike, that in this conflict sweet,
The path of pleasure should to glory lead ;
All things were ready for the purposed deed ;
Thus springing from the couch 't was planned that he.
Should leap into the arms of Victory.

Our Reverend Lourdis, you well know, was sent
By holy Denis with the wise intent
Of serving him 'mid Britain's cohorts dire.
In action free, he sang the chant of choir,
Said mass and even to confession hied.
Talbot upon his plighted faith relied,
Ne'er thinking one so dull, a rustic vile,
A brainless monk, dross of conventional pile,
Who'd had a public scourging at his will,
Could e'er outwit a general of skill.
But righteous Heav'n in this judged otherwise,
In its decrees strange whims will oft arise,
To mock and make the greatest merely tools,
Sages confounding by the means of fools.
From Paradise dispatched, a ray of sense
Beamed to illumine Lourdis' pate so dense.
The mass of thickened brains within his skull
Lighter became anon and far less dull,
Amazed, he felt new mind his head endow ;

Alas ! we think, the Lord above knows how !
Let us for springs invisible enquire,
That, more or less, with thought the brains inspire :
Those divers atoms, let our wits descry,
That from sound sense, or reason turned awry ;
In that sly nook of pericranium's placed
An Homer's genius and a Virgil's taste ?
And by what leaven, with coldest poison fraught,
Was Zoilus, Frélon or Thersites taught ?
A friend of Flora's regions of perfume,
Near pink beholds the baneful hemlock bloom,
'Tis the Creator's will holds sovran sway,
That hidden hand which all things must obey,
Unseen by eyes in doctor's pedant pate :
Their useless prattle we'll not imitate.

Lourdis, grown curious, sought all to see,
His sight renewed employed instructively.
That night, toward the town he saw incline
An host of cooks, who carried in a line
Such fare as a most dainty feast implies,
Hams, truffles, wood-hens, partridges and pies ;
The chased glass flagons of the rarest wine
Into the cooling ice the grooms consign,
That brilliant liquid, juice of ruby glow,

Brought from the blessed cellars of Cîteaux.
To postern gate in silence thus then sped
Lourdis, new science buzzing through his head—
Not Latin, but that still more happy code,
Leading us through this scurvy world's sad road—
Of eloquence the flow anon displayed,
By kindest courtesy and prudence rayed ;
Regarding all through corner of keen eye,
With deepest craft abounding—courtier sly ;
The monk, in fine, of monks was most complete.
'T is thus in all times we his fellows meet,
Speeding from kitchen to the council-hall,
In peace or war intriguing, troubling all ;
Who first in rooms of humble burghers waits,
Then steals into the halls of potentates ;
Disturbs the world, and aye on discord bent,
Is sometimes clever, sometimes insolent ;
Now greedy wolf, now full of fox's wiles,
Now antic ape, or using serpent's guiles ;
Who wonders that the British knaves decreed,
That Britain should be purged of such a breed ?

By unfrequented path our Lourdis sped,
Which, through a wood, to royal quarters led ;
Conning this mighty mystery in mind,

He went good brother Bonifoux to find :
Don Bonifoux, just then with thought sedate
Posed most profoundly o'er the page of fate,
He measured links invisible to sight ;
Which time and destiny in bonds unite ;
Deeds trifling and events supremely great,
The world to come and our material state ;
The whole he drew to focus in his mind,
Effect and cause enraptured he defined,
Their order saw, and found a *rendez-vous*
Might save an empire or a state subdue.
The Confessor in thought still kept enrolled
How once were seen three lilies all of gold
On alabaster field,—the rump of page,
An English page ! Nor less his thoughts engage
Those ruined walls, Hermaphrodix the Mage ;
But what astounded most his wond'ring brain,
Was to see Lourdis to some sense attain,
From which he prophesied that in the end
To good St. Denis, Britain's host must bend.

Lourdis by Bonifoux, in form polite
Presented was to the royal favorite ;
Her beauty and the King he compliments,
Then takes his story up and represents

How Talbot's prudence had been lulled to sleep,
That night a *rendez-vous* he went to keep,
By postern-gate, and how the chieftain there
Was to be met by Louvet's love-sick fair ;
Quoth he: "A stratagem one may pursue ;
There follow him, surprise his person too,
As by Dalilah, Samson was of old.
Oh ! Agnes most divine, this theme unfold
To mighty Charles." "Ah ! reverend Sir," she said,
"Think you this monarch is at all times led
On me love's soft effusions to bestow ?"
"I think he damns himself, though naught I know !"
Lourdis replied ; "My robe condemns love's sway,
My heart absolves him. Fortunate are they
Who at some epoch shall be damned for thee !"
Quoth Agnes : "Monk, your converse flatters me,
And proves your head with ample wit supplied."
To corner then conducting him aside,
Thus whispered she : "Hast thou amidst our foes,
The youthful Briton seen, who's named Monroe ?"
The subtile monk in black replied : "In sooth,
I have beheld him ; 'tis a charming youth."
Agnes deep blushing bent to earth a look,
Then grew composed again ; his hand she took ;
Thus cunning Lourdis, ere the night had fled,

With his great king and master's closeted.

Lourdis then made a more than mortal speech,
To which good Charles' wits could barely reach ;
His sovran council hé assembled straight,
His almoners, war's chieftains too, sedate.
Amidst these heroes, her compeers, sat Joan,
With mind for counsel as for combats prone ;
While lovely Agnes in a gentle way,
With thread and needle made discreetest play,
From time to time, deliv'ring good advice,
Which good King Charles adopted in a trice.

'Twas then proposed to seize, with skilful care,
Beneath the ramparts, Talbot and his fair :
So Vulcan and the Sun in Heav'n were taught,
Mars with the golden Aphrodite caught.
This mighty enterprise was swift prepared,
Where head and hand an equal danger shared.
Dunois first started by the longest road,
Made a forced march which well his foresight showed,
An artful scheme that history vaunts at last.
Betwixt the army and the town they passed,
And lo ! before the postern-gate deployed,
As Talbot with Dame President enjoyed

Of dawning' union the first keen delights,
Flatt'ring himself, that from the couch to fights
Quite hero-like, but one step he should make,
Six regiments in defile the road must take.
The order's giv'n: the city has been ta'en—
But the foregoing eve each soldier's brain
Was petrified with Lourdis' long discourse,
Each gaped, bereft of motion and of force;
Asleep and side by side on plain they laid;
Such the great miracle which Denis played.

Joan with Dunois and the selected train
Of gallant knights, soon having past the plain,
Already lined, 'neath Orléans' ramparts strong,
Of the besiegers' camp the trenches long.
Mounted on horse of Barbary's famed breed,
In Charles' stable then the only steed,
Joan ambled, grasping in her sturdy hand,
Of Deborah renowned, the Heavenly brand;
While noble broad-sword did her side adorn,
Wherewith poor Holophernes' head was shorn;
And thus equipped, with thoughts devout, the Maid
Beneath her breath to Denis' saint thus prayed:
"Thou who hast deigned to feeble maid like me,
These gloriūs arms confide at Domremy,

Prove of my frailty support divine ;
O ! pardon, if some vanity was mine,
When flattered senses heard thy faithless ass,
With freedom hail me as the fairest lass.
Dear Patron ! deign to recollection call
That through my means the Britons were to fall,
Thus punishing foul deeds in ardour done,
When they polluted each afflicted nun.
A greater feat presents itself to-day ;
Naught can I do, without thy fostering ray,
Endue this arm with force like thine to toil,
At its last gasp, preserve the Gallic soil,
Avenge of Charles the lily's tarnished hue,
With presidential Louvet's honour too ;
Ah ! let us to this gracious end be led,
And Heaven's mercy ever guard thy head !"

From height celestial, Holy Denis heard,
And in the camp her donkey felt the word ;
'Twas Joan he knew, and clapping pennons too,
Anon with crest erect t'wards her he flew ;
On knee craved grace, her pardon to procure,
For his attempts at tenderness impure.
"By demons," he exclaimed, "I was possessed ;
I now repent :" he wept with grief oppressed ;

Conjured her then his willing back to cross,
He could not of her weight sustain the loss,
Nor bear another 'neath the Maid to trot:
Joan well perceived an heavenly beam, I wot,
Restored the flighty donkey as her steed;
Of grace the penitent received the meed;
Then whipped she him, and gave him counsel meet,
To prove, from thenceforth, sober and discreet.
The donkey swore, and fired with courage rare,
Proud of his burdon, bore her through the air.
On Britons swift as lightning flash he starts,
Like forked fire that with the thunder parts;
Joan flying, overwhelmed the country round
With streams of blood, imbuing verdant ground
On every side, of limbs dispersed the wrecks,
While heaped were seen by hundreds, slaughtered necks.

In crescent then the harbinger of night
Widely dispersed its pale and dubious light;
Still stunned, the Britons owned stupendous dread,
To view whence the blows came, each raised his head;
In vain they strove to see Death's dooming blade;
With panic struck, they ran, misled, dismayed,
And rushing on, fell into Dunois' power.
Charles was of kings the happiest in that hour,

His foes rushed on, impending fate to dare :
So scattered partridges, in realms of air,
In clusters fall, destroyed by pointer keen,
And torn by shot ; imbrued the heath is seen.
The donkey's brayings loudly roared alarm,
Fierce Joan on high extends her virgin arm ;
Pursued, cut, pierced, torn, severed, bruised and rent ;
All force opposed to Dunois' prowess bent ;
While good King Charles takes an unerring sight,
And shoots all those whom fear had put to flight.

Talbot, intoxicated with the charms
Of Louvet, and joys tasted in her arms,
As he lay languishing upon her breast,
Was roused by sudden noise of war's unrest.
Glowing with triumph : "By my soul," cried he,
"There are my troops, Orléans falls to me."
Aloud, he thus applauds his wily pains,
"O love, 'tis thou," he cried, "who cities gains!"
Our knight thus fed by hope, replete with bliss,
Gave to his tender fair a parting kiss,
Sprang from the couch, attired himself and fleet
Repaired the vanquishers of France to meet.

Naught but a single squire appeared to view,

Who ever dared bold Talbot's steps pursue :
Deep in his confidence a gallant wight,
And worthy vassal of so brave a knight,
Guarding no less his ward-robe than his lance.
"Come seize your prey, my gallant friends advance !"
Talbot exclaimed, but soon joy disappeared,
Instead of friends, our Joan, with lance upreared,
Bore down on him, on her celestial ass.
He saw two hundred French the portal pass
Great Talbot shuddered, palsied o'er with dread.
"Long live the King !" each Gallic champion said.
"Let's drink ; advance, my friends, with me ;
On Gascons, Picards ; yield to jollity,
No quarter give, of carnage take your fill,
Yonder they are, my friends ! shoot, fire and kill !"

Talbot, recovered from the dire control,
Which first held potent empire o'er his soul,
Strove by the gate his freedom to maintain.
So erst all bleeding, on the ravaged plain,
Anchises' son his victor dared engage ;
But Talbot fought with even greater rage ;
Briton was he, and seconded by squire,
Both would the world attack with courage dire.
Now front to front, now back to back they strove,

And torrents of their victors 'fore them drove ;
At length their vigour can no longer live,
An easy victory to the French they give.
Talbot surrendered, though unbeaten still.
Dunois and Joan extolled his gallant skill ;
Then both proceed, complacent to reclaim,
For spouse, his Presidential dame again.
Without suspicion he received her well—
Your gentle husbands never aught can tell—
Nor e'er did Louvet learn by what strange chance,
Madame Louvet had saved the realm of France.
Denis applauded from the heavenly height ;
Saint George on horse-back shuddered at the sight ;
The ass intones his hoarse and braying strain,
Which makes the Britons shake and shake again.
The King, now ranked with conquerors of renown,
With lovely Agnes supped in Orléans town ;
Joan, proud and tender, having sent away
That very night to Heav'n her donkey gray,
The vow she erst had made had never broke ;
To friend Dunois she kept the word she spoke.
And Lourdis midst the faithful cohort strayed :
Bawling out still: "*Ye Britons, she's a Maid!*"

VARIANT OF CANTO XXI *

*President Louvet falls sadly in love with the Lord Talbot —
The Maid with the ass of Denis.*

Now must I tell what consequences sad
Conculix' most disgraceful conduct had ;
What to audacious Tirconel befell,
What succour strange and salutary as well
Our Reverend friar was able to entreat
For Dorothy, and for the Sorel sweet,
And with what art he set them safe and free.
With what a fire and what dexterity,
Maid from Dunois was ravished by the ass,
And how God's vengeance on him came to pass,
Who had, with Satan's help, defiled the Maid.
But before all, 't is Orléans siege arrayed,
Where many warriors brave clashed arms and fell,
'T is there we need to let our interest dwell.
O God of Love! O power by frailty known!
O fatal Love! how nearly hadst thou thrown
That citadel of France in hostile hands,
Success un hoped of those who hate our lands.
What Bedford, in experience grown old,
And Talbot sought to do, albeit bold,
And failed at last, O Love, thou wouldest attain!
Reader, reflect, their fatal flames of bane
Your bodies burn, and sore your souls beguile.
Dear child! thou workest ruin with a smile.

* This Canto having been entirely changed, we give it as it exists in the edition of twenty-four cantos, in which it forms the last Canto.

In that sad land, while Love his arrows flings,
Where hundred heroes struggled for two Kings,
His tender hand, months since wrought grievous smart
On mighty Talbot with a golden dart,
That in the first of his two sheaves he found.
It was before that siege so long renowned,
An armistice, alas too short, they make ;
Louvet and he, in peace their supper take ;
This Louvet, president of worthy fame,
Was rash enough to bid to sup his dame.
Madame inclined somewhat to play the prude ;
Wherefore Love thought her pride should be subdued.
For prudes he hates and oft will them abase.
Thus he deranged the sternness of her face,
Her noble dignity he changed indeed,
For certain traits which unto madness lead.
Dame President, on this auspicious day,
Great Talbot wins and charms his wits away.

You've seen already that grim escalade,
Assault of blood, and horrid cannonade,
Those brave attempts, and all those desperate fights,
Within, without, and on the ramparts' heights ;
When Talbot and his fiery following train
The ramparts and the gates had burst and ta'en ;
When on them from the houses' tops there broke
Sword, flame and grisly death at one fell stroke.
Then fiery Talbot, with his agile walk,
Tramples the dying, through the town to stalk,
He upset all things, crying out aloud :
"My Britons, enter and disarm the crowd!"
Much he resembled then to war's great god,
Beneath his footsteps echoing the sod,
When Discord and Bellona and high Fate,
As minister of Death arm him with hate.

Dame President within her walls a breach

That looked upon a ruined cot, could reach ;
And through this hole her gallant could espy,
His golden helm, where feathers curl and fly,
His mailed arm, and those live sparks of flame,
Which from his pupils' orbits darting came,
That carriage proud, that demi-god's great air ;
Dame President was almost in despair ;
With shame dumbfounded and bereft of wits :
As once, when in her grated stage box sits
That erst famed beauty love has sore inflamed,
And ogles Baron, actor justly famed.
With ardent eyes she feasts upon his face,
His rich adornment, gestures and his grace,
Mingled with his her accents in tones low,
Love's flames received, her senses owned the glow.

Unable to resist, Dame President,
Consumed by passion, calls her confidant :
"Run, Suson, fly, and when you find him, say,
O bid him come and lead me hence away !
Convey to him, if him you can not find
That he take pity on my lot unkind ;
That if he be a worthy, gallant knight,
I'll sup with him, within his house to-night."
The confidant dispatched a little page ;
It was her brother ; well he earned his wage ;
With no delay six hardy lackeys call
At Louvet's house, and force the outer wall.

They enter and a woman masked they see,
Painted and patched, with many a coquetry,
Her hair or true or false raised to a bow,
On either side in curls was rayed below.
They take her up ; she vanished from view,
By secret paths which the brave Talbot knew.

The handsome Talbot on that famous day

Through so much blood and fire had made his way,
That on the eve in dalliance with Love's charms,
He would forget the trouble of his arms.
Each mighty hero, though he win or lose,
To sup with a fair dame, would rather choose.
Thus Talbot, who has suffered no defeat,
Awaits within his house his lady sweet.

All things are ready for a supper fine ;
The chased glass flagons of the rarest wine
Twixt lumps of cooling ice are there to tap,
Those liquid rubies, and that brilliant sap,
Which Citeaux' blessed cellars hoard and hide ;
In the proud tent, upon the other side,
A sofa, elegantly shaped, is placed,
Soft, low and wide, with proper fittings graced,
With back inclined, and two supports incased.
There our two lovers at their will could play ;
Sir Talbot 'gan to live in the French way.

His care was first forthwith, the fair to find,
Who to his wooing had proved passing kind.
All things around him of his lady tell.
They bring her in, she's introduced as well.
A monster gray, in childish ruffs and frills,
Just three feet high, not to forget her heels.
Her little eyes with lively red ornate,
Yellow effusions ever inundate ;
Her broad flat nose, twisted and turned within
Seems to drop straight upon her long hooked chin.

The Devil's mistress, Talbot thinks to take ;
He utters cries at which the tables shake.
It was fat Louvet's sister, whom had brought
The guard when in his house his wife they sought ;
She strutted round with pride and pleasure spent,
In rich delight at such a ravishment.

Dame President the direst grief assailed ;
To think how her high enterprise had failed,
She quite lost heart at this misreckoning,
And cursed her sister like a Valois King.
Already love had troubled sore her wit,
'T was worse now jealousy had part in it,
Her troubled mind was lit with further flame,
And madder than before she now became.

More mad, the Ass once more to Joan returned ;
The Maid was moved ; her troubled senses yearned ;
Her eyes on fire, "For Denis' sake !" cried she,
"Is it true, Sir, that you're in love with me ?"
"In love with you ? O, can you doubt it more ?"
Replied the Ass ! "You only I adore.
Heav'n ! I was jealous of the Cordelier,
And served with pleasure when the squire was there,
Who saved you from the cloistered lust and rage,
Which the frocked beast endeavoured to assuage.
But jealous more a thousand times am I
Of the brute Dunois, fruit of bastardy !
With jealous anger drunk, with mad love fraught,
Dunois to Italy I did transport.
He came back weary, offered you his heart ;
More handsome he, more amorous my part !
O noble Joan ! thine age's prop and pride,
Whose maidenhead the world has glorified,
Is it Dunois' to play the victor's part ?
It shall be I, I swear it by my heart !
Sure Heav'n removed she-asses from my way,
That mine embraces, pure for thee should stay !
If ever gentle, tender and discreet,
Until to-day I've kept my secret sweet,
If Joan be flattered my desires to greet,
If full of love, as ardent as it's true,
I Heavenly paths forsake, because of you ;
If oft upon my back you've used to ride,

To bear me, in your turn, you might decide."

The Maiden this audacious suit received
With anger, which amazement sore retrieved ;
And yet her mighty heart could but reflect
Some secret flattery at so strange effect,
Caused by her beauty signal and immense,
Upon so crass a soul's thick-witted sense,
She stretched her lily hand unto her swain,
With scarce a thought ; then drew it back again.
She blushed afraid, condemns herself, alas !
Then reassured exclaims to him : "Fair ass,
Chimerical the hope you entertain ;
Respect my duty and my glory's chain ;
Too broad the diff'rences that us divide.
I never could your tenderness abide ;
O, have a care and urge me not too far !"
The ass replied : "Love levels every bar.
Think of the swan by Leda not disdained,
Nathless an honest woman she remained.
Know you the daughter unto Minos born,
Who for a bull's sake heroes held in scorn,
And for her comely beast bore many a pain ?
Know, by an eagle, Ganymede was ta'en,
How Philyra her lavish favours threw
On the sea-god, whom as a horse she knew."

The Devil, while thus he argued from his store,
The Devil, first author of all fabled lore,
Furnished him fresh examples for his case,
So that the Ass might take our *Savants'* place.
Joan listened : what can eloquence not teach ?
The ear attack, if you the heart would reach ;
Astowishment in sudden silence sinks.
Joan is confused, she wonders, dreams and thinks.
To love an ass and yield to him her pride !
There was dishonour she could not abide,

Who lived, her innocence preserved, to tell,
From muleteers and knights of France as well,
Who had, supported by high Heaven's grace,
In mortal fight brought Chandos to disgrace !
But this fair ass a gallant seems divine,
What hero, more than he, can sparkle, shine ?
None could more tender be, nor show more wit ;
Upon his back the Christ was wont to sit,
Eternal plains have ever been his place,
Of Seraphim he has the wings and face ;
No bestiality in him abides,
Rather Divinity his aspect hides.

Within her heart these thoughts a tempest formed,
And all her mind was troubled and deformed.
So on the ocean deep, one oft may spy
The haughty tyrants of the wave and sky,
One rushing from the distant Austral caves,
While one from icy Boreal regions raves,
Some wandering ship on Ocean to appal,
Seeking Ceylon, Sumatra or Bengal.
Anon the hull seems lifted to the sky,
Then near the rocks is hurried perilously ;
Then comes the abyss with its engulfling swell,
Seeming to issue from the jaws of Hell.

Thus is our Amazon in torment thrown ;
The ass insisting, agitated Joan,
In her confusion, could not hold at all
That useful rudder which we reason call.
Her eyes are all ablaze with tender fire,
Her senses reel, her heart admits desire ;
Anon her face to sudden pallor grows,
Anon with lively blush it burns and glows.
A direful gesture of the orator,
More than all else was dangerous to her.
No longer o'er her senses is she queen ;

Quite moist and languishing her eyes are seen.
Out of her bed her gracious head has slid,
In half closed eyes the shame she feels is hid,
Her charms robust are lavished to the view,
Bared are her buttocks' curves of swarthy hue;
She looks below, and wonders what she sees;
Bended beneath her are her pliant knees.
So we are told Thibouville and Villars,
Who imitated Caesar from afar,
Inflamed by the fire which was their fate,
With lowered heads would Nicomander wait,
And frequently with vigorous emprise
Their Picard lackeys' bodies fertilize.

The cunning boy who rules all things with rods,
The human race, donkeys as well as gods,
With bow in hand, in heights of Heaven stayed,
And with a smile of pleasure watched the Maid,
Twisting her rump and twining close her thighs,
Catching the fire with which her lover sighs.
Hasting the moment when her maid-hood dies.
Nor is her satin crupper loath to press
The bare sword of her ass with fond caress.

Three times the Maid, of maiden-hood relieved,
Within her burning manor had received
The precious unction of the heavenly spring;
And times a four that point so menacing,
Within the fair to very quick had been.
To see is but to feel — so Joan had seen
The mighty fire within her person lit,
Spark after spark be born and die from it;
When suddenly she hears a voice that cries:
"Hasten, O Joan, your exploits signalize;
Rise ye at once, Dunois is under arms,
The fight is up, already our gendarmes
By the king's side to rally have begun;

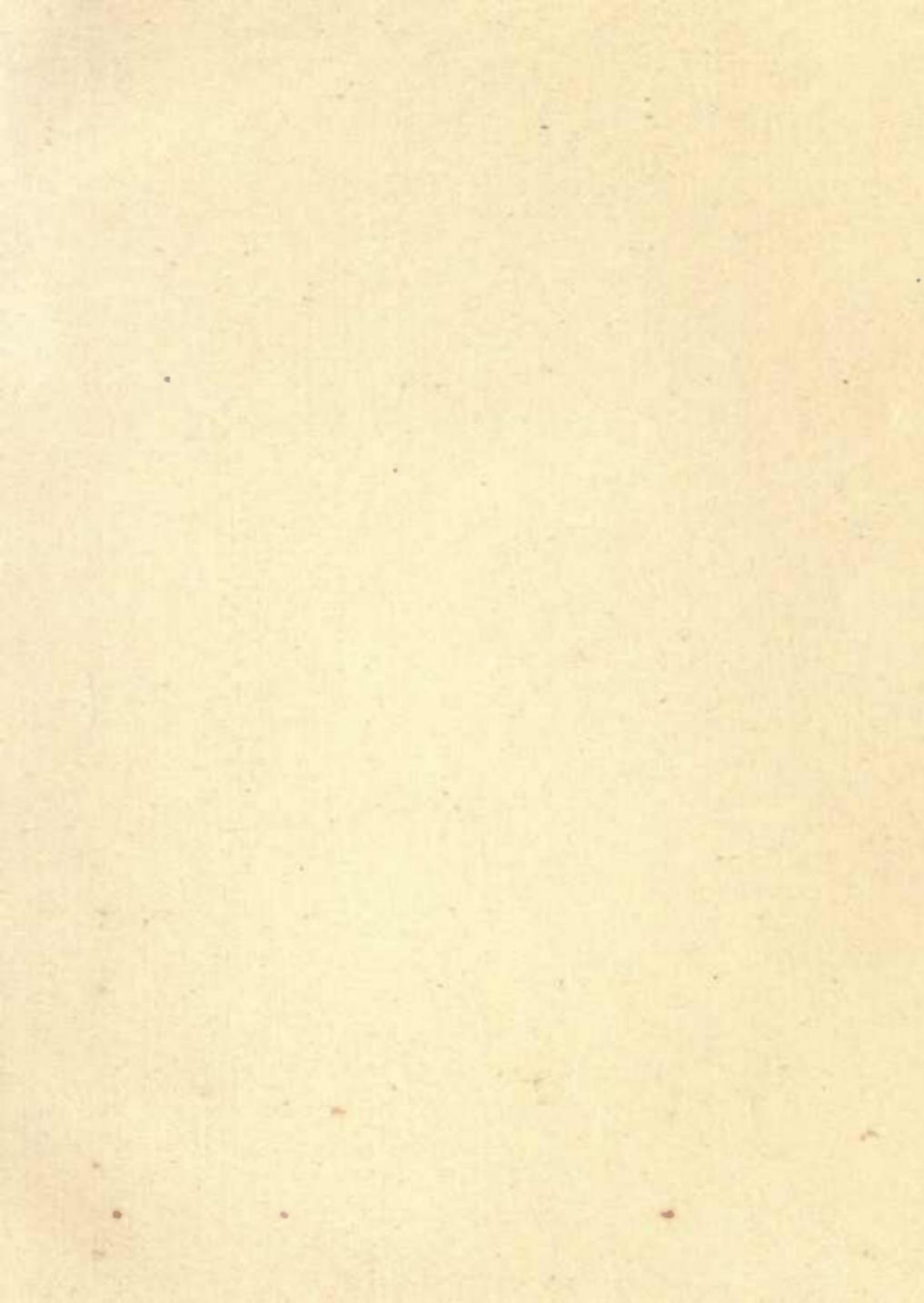
Equip yourself, 't is time that sleep were done."

'T was Dorothy who spoke, the young, the fair,
By kind intent to Joan she'd hurried there;
Thinking to find her wrapped in slumber's arms,
She came to see, and hurry her to arms.
Thus crying to the Fair, who panted still,
She oped the door: the lock was fastened ill,
The twain were at their zenith as she came.
Three times she crossed herself for very shame.
Venus was less astounded, when of old
Webbed traps of steel were made her form to hold,
For all the gods and cuckold Vulcan too,
Naked with Mars above she met their view.
When Dorothy was recognized by Joan,
As seeing all, she lay as turned to stone;
Then turned to bed again, arranged the sheet,
Before she said, in tones as firm as sweet:
"My child, a mighty mystery you observe,
It is a vow, made for the King I serve:
And if appearances against me stalk,
I'm sorry for it — but you will not talk.
No limits I admit to friendship's right,
Yours is my silence in an equal plight;
Especially from Dunois hide this thing,
Or you might risk your country and your King."
So speaking, blithely leapt she from her bed,
Essence of lavender she lavished,
Breeches she took, a change of shift she made,
In cuirass and in arms was soon arrayed,
When Dorothy, still lost in her surprise,
Thus spoke to her with frankness in her eyes:
"Madam, in truth, my merely simple mind
Is little versed in exploits of this kind;
Your secret I will keep, I swear it so:
For bitter wounds of love, myself, I know;
Misfortune, touching me, has fully taught

To pardon harmless frailties as one ought.
All tastes I do respect, oh, pray believe!
But I confess, I hardly can conceive,
How when within one's arms one may embrace
Handsome Dunois, one can oneself abase,
Thus to reward the vile needs of an ass?
How can one bring oneself to such a pass,
Or how submit oneself to the desires,
And attitude, which such a case requires?
I should be quite with consternation dazed,
Alarmed, beside myself and sore amazed,
At the mere thought of what the pain must be
In finding space for such enormity;
The stiffness and the unimagined strength
Of the destroying weapon, and its length;
In fine, how can you unresistingly,
Without disgust, quite conscientiously,
Have so small vanity, so little pride,
As thus to serve desires undignified?
The handsome Dunois for an ass to leave,
Hoping, withal, some pleasure to receive;
For pleasure you received, my beauteous Dame!
I read it in your eyes, your eyes of flame.
In me, at least, weak nature has her share;
I know myself, I should have too much fear
At such a swain." Then Joan, replying, said,
And sighed: "*Alas! had he loved you instead!*"

POSTSCRIPT OF THE AUTHOR

'Tis by these verses, children, of mine ease
I sought old age to soften and appease.
O gift of God ! soft love, desire so sweet,
'T is in your image, happiness we meet :
Illusion's first of pleasures, after all.
Freely I went in my secluded hall,
To sing the flames of Dunois and of Joan ;
For jealous furies, they might well atone ;
For kingly cruelties and slanderous lies,
Shafts of the fool and follies of the wise ;
But who's the fiend who steals from me this page ?
My broken lyre drops from my hands in rage.
No fresh exploits await—'tis understood,
Reader ! my Joan shall keep her maidenhood,
Until those virgins vowed to God alone,
For all their vows, know how to keep their own.



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